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C.

[Ames, Fisher]

THE

INFLUENCES OF DEMOCRACY

ON

LIBERTY, PROPERTY,

AND

THE HAPPINESS OF SOCIETY,

CONSIDERED.

BY AN AMERICAN,

FORMERLY MEMBER OF CONGRESS.

[Fisher Ames]

TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

AN INTRODUCTION,

BY

HENRY EWBANK, Esq.

Anarchy and government are both before us, and in our choice. If we fall, we fall by our folly, not our fate; and we shall evince to the astonished world, of how small influence to produce national happiness are the fairest gifts of heaven, a healthy climate, a fruitful soil, and inestimable laws, when they are conferred upon a frivolous, perverse, and ungrateful generation.

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INTRODUCTION.

The publication of a foreign work implies a high estimate of its value in the Editor. Its merits belong exclusively to the Author; to the Editor belongs merely the credit of sending forth a well-timed publication, and of having formed, not only a high, but a correct estimate of its value. As he is not blinded by any parental partialities, he is, if he err in judgment, fairly chargeable with the blame due to his mistake. On me, therefore, rest the blame of want of judgment, if any Senator shall deign to peruse these pages, and not lay them down with nearly the same feeling as that with which a mariner folds up his chart—of being better able to steer the vessel of the State in safety, amid the rocks and whirlpools which always disturb the current of Liberty.

There is no arrogance in a mere Editor thus expressing himself, unless it is arrogance to be sensible of the merits of another; unless it is pride to be willing to learn wisdom from those who, as our descendants, we are, perhaps, too

much accustomed to think in some sense our inferiors. And yet, I err in saying inferiors; for it is the fashion of the day to consider the Americans as outstripping us in the race of liberty, and every Leveller rounds his paragraph by an appeal to the United States of America, of which he knows little more than that they have no King nor Church Establishment.

I object not to this appeal; it is the error of the day to be guided by theory, and not by history; but I do object to the attempt to fortify theory by an apparent appeal to fact, when the one is, as much as the other, the creature of the imagination. The United States of America have enjoyed since the establishment of the federal government, as much liberty as is compatible with the existence of society, and wherever liberty dispenses in full measure her inestimable blessings, there the energies of man are put forth with power; much that is lovely and excellent is exhibited; the desert blossoms, and the wilderness teems with a stirring and industrious population.

But whilst it would be as unfair, as foreign to my feelings, to deny that the freedom of the

Constitution has been favourable to the rapid developement of the resources of the country; it admits not of doubt that her prosperity is mainly attributable to a happy concurrence of political and natural causes. The real question is not, as to the tendency of liberty to awaken the energies of a people, a truth well understood here by experience, but whether the liberty of the United States be based on a foundation which is likely to perpetuate its blessings to her children's children? And is her Constitution so superior to our own as to make it a fit model for us to imitate; and is it prudent and expedient for us to lop off, as unsightly excrescences, all those parts of our institutions which she has not adopted?

Whatever difficulty may attend the discussion of these inquiries, arises not from any doubt as to the value of most of our ancient institutions; but we have not in the United States of America, a society formed without their intervention, or carried on without their beneficial influence. There is so much that is common to both nations, that when the institutions themselves are wanting, their effects are still partially found. The chords which have been strung here, vibrate as far as

the English language is spoken. I will assume, for example, that the establishment and constitution of our National Church has a tendency to support sobriety in the exhibition of religious truth. This character is imprinted in the works which proceed from her ministers; and these books, if they attain any celebrity here, are usually reprinted and circulated widely in every part of the wide-spread Union. I remember one Presbyterian minister stating, that he had been the means of introducing seventy-five copies of Scott's *Commentary on the Bible* into different families. A very large proportion of the theological works in use among the various denominations of Christians proceed from the pens of ministers of the Church of England. Thus, the same books which are operating advantageously on English society are equally efficacious on the other side of the Atlantic. The whole system of American Jurisprudence rests on the same foundation as our own of Common Law; but the engrafting new institutions thereon does not necessarily imply that they could have given birth to it, and fostered it to its present state of perfection; whilst it is obvious, that it would have a very beneficial effect on those Institutions themselves.

I grudge not to America whatever advantages she may have borrowed from us; indeed, in many instances, her title to them is as good as our own, that of birth-right. In a common origin and common language, I like to trace brotherhood. There is in each nation an ardent attachment to liberty; in each nation a deep sense of true religion; in each a high value for domestic happiness. The essentials of character are the same in the two nations, and, whatever demagogues may say, all that is truly valuable and excellent in America, excepting such natural advantages as arise from abundance of fertile soil, and similar causes, is referrible to the same origin, as the like blessings with ourselves. It only excites my indignation, when the circumstances of America are brought forward and placed in opposition to our own, and an argument from them attempted to be deduced in favour of a more popular government; as if the happiness and comforts of the people were attributable to it; when so far from this being the case, it is manifest, that all the virtue and all the talent of Washington and his coadjutors, will be found to have been unequal to the task of devising such safeguards to the Constitution

as should prevent the Republic from degenerating into a mere Democracy, and thereby engendering that licentiousness which must inevitably be their ruin.

Democracy, like the deadly-nightshade, is sure to produce the poison-berry, though it may ripen quicker in one aspect than another. Many circumstances have combined to give a duration to the constitution of the United States, which its own elements seemed ill calculated to afford. Thinness of population—towns separated by great distances—different local governments—the absence of a mob, easily exciteable by the cry of want of bread—present not a favourable field for the exercise of the Demagogue's trade; but nothing has more contributed to postpone the evil day of civil discord, than external pressure and excitement.

The original compact, which answered all the ends of government, while the British army was in the field, sufficed not in peace to provide the salaries of the clerks in the different offices of government. Happily, faction was young, and under the auspices of Washington, and such worthies as Hamilton and Fisher Ames, a splendid and rare instance

was given to the world of a people intrusting larger powers to the government for their own good. And they have reaped a rich harvest in the prolonged enjoyment of freedom; though the government, which, with the prejudices of the people, was perhaps as good as it was practicable to form, has been found to have had too strong a tendency to democracy. This was soon discovered by its friends, and the sad conviction gave birth to most of the papers contained in this volume. Should any of its predictions appear tardy in their fulfilment, it is, perhaps, chiefly attributable to the long continuance of foreign excitement. The French Revolution, baneful as were its effects in some respects on the United States, contributed most remarkably, for a time, to prevent one of the evils much dreaded by Washington,—geographical divisions in the Union. Party spirit received its hue and complexion from the lurid flames of the Gallic volcano, and two and the same parties, having reference as much to European as American politics, divided the government of each State, as well as that of the whole confederation. Thus for a time, attention was diverted from local differences, till the unfortunate collision

with this country, awakening the old revolutionary feelings, with a sense of common danger, merged all minor dissensions in the one great and paramount interest to combat the common enemy.

When peace was restored I first visited the United States, and I well recollect the impression made at that time on my mind by the strong national feeling which I observed. Partial success had much elated the people, and every citizen seemed to delight in anticipating the future greatness of his country. If this feeling were not altogether justifiable in itself, we, as Englishmen, have no right to condemn it, and it was, at least, calculated to produce, among themselves, a great practical good,—Union. But, in how short a term of years has Democracy uprooted one, as I vainly fancied, of the fairest flowers of Republicanism —an ardent attachment to the integrity of the Constitution! To have spoken then of a division of the States, would have been deemed gross ignorance in a foreigner, and treason in a citizen. Now it is a subject publicly canvassed, and probably, the real, though not altogether the avowed motive of the Nullification party.

The increasing violence attendant on Elections in the large cities, marks the progress of that licentiousness which leads to anarchy and despotism. Already, the arm of the law is nearly paralysed during this time of excitement. At the last election in Philadelphia, peace was tolerably well maintained in the city by the knowledge of the preparations made to put down violence by force; but, without the limits of the city authorities, the committee of the unpopular party was tumultuously and ferociously assailed. The mob met with a warmer reception than they had anticipated, and were repulsed, with considerable loss of life; but they soon returned to the charge, and failing to force admission, set fire to the house, and burnt it, with the whole stack of adjoining buildings, to the ground. In the large cities, every election is now a season of alarm, and occasions, to the quiet and industrious citizens, anxious solicitude for the peace of the community, and for the lives and property of those who stand foremost on the unpopular side. Corruption and perjury unblushingly prevail. It is notorious, that at the late election in Philadelphia, men of the lowest order were collected from canals and other places,

and introduced into particular wards of the city where a certain number were required to turn the election. In such cases, subscription pays the trifling tax; perjury gives the necessary residence, and too frequently, the judge, the creature of faction, willingly shuts his eyes; and, let it be remembered, that the Ballot draws the veil of oblivion over the names of the perjured.

It is not my intention to trespass upon the time of my reader by observations of my own, but to bring before him a living picture of Democracy by the hand of a master. And if the testimony of an eye-witness—an American Republican—and a most ardent lover of liberty—is entitled to any attention, thinking men will perhaps pause before they sacrifice themselves to the Juggernaut of self-government, or give way to the specious, but false opinion, that the transfer of political power to the people, is necessarily attended by an increase of liberty.

Fisher Ames lived in the most eventful period of the American history. It was in the very prime of his days that the revolution commenced, which separated the colonies from the mother country. He lived through it, and was a member of Congress,

while Washington was President of the United States. After his decease, his scattered works were collected, and published in Boston in the year 1809, under the title of *Works of Fisher Ames*, to which are prefixed, *Notices of his Life and Character*. They are made up of speeches delivered, and of essays written on various occasions of public interest, between the years 1786 and 1807. Many of them first appeared in the public prints of the day. To publish again here, or perhaps any where, the whole of his speeches and essays, to repeat even their appellations, or retain their several divisions, would not merely be superfluous, but would tend now to defeat their chief aim, inasmuch as it would perplex the exhibition of the specific and momentous principle urged from first to last, by keeping it still wrapped up in a dress appropriate only to days gone by. The author's object when he spoke and when he wrote, the object of his American editors, and the object of these extracts from their posthumous compilation, being all one and the same—the setting forth of that principle —as little as possible which is unnecessary to its clear elucidation is retained; nor more

left out than this purpose demanded. The American book has been taken page by page, and this formed out of it, by simply passing over parts unsuitable in themselves, or no longer applicable, and so arranging the rest, as to introduce the author faithfully to his new reader, in a manner convenient for the purposes of both.

It has not been wished to efface all American allusions, where these are familiar to the English reader; but whatever advantage there might have been in originally assuming the name of "Camillus," or "Falkland," there would be none now. A few chapters contain his successive compositions; they place him, with perfect honesty to himself, on an arena, to which, although he did not contemplate it, his views are eminently applicable. Some freedom, however, with his paragraphs was indispensable. They were conceived with the fervour natural to the moment, and prompted, for the most part, by the circumstances of the times. The events they commented upon, the passions they were simultaneous with, have passed away, but so far as it goes, this abstract is a faithful transcript. No license has been taken with the sentiments, beyond

such occasional substitution as the words State or Commonwealth for Republic; words equally applicable to both countries, and not so strongly calculated to carry the reader's reflections to the western side of the Atlantic, when they fit equally well scenes nearer home. They constantly refer to a single, to a very intelligible principle. The enlightened author's sole object in all his speeches, and in all his writings, was to awaken his countrymen to a single truth. This principle, this truth, by whatsoever fact illustrated, with whatsoever argument urged, however earnestly pleaded, was always one and the same. It was his beginning, his middle, and his end. This was his watchword, — DEMOCRACY IS NOT LIBERTY. The preservation of the constitution in republican America, does not more vitally depend upon the right comprehension of this momentous truth, than does that of "this most noble monarchy."

Shall we be told indeed that we may safely trust to the spread of science and knowledge? "A nation," says our author, "must be exceedingly well educated, in which the ignorant and the credulous are few. It is by no means certain, that a nation composed wholly of

scholars and philosophers, would contain less presumption, political ignorance, levity, and extravagance, than another state peopled by tradesmen, farmers, and men of business, without a metaphysician or speculatist among them." We do not see that men learn from treatises on physics and natural philosophy, to argue rightly on politics.—I mean, to argue on political matters in the same manner as they would on physical. In accounting for natural phenomena, no hypothesis is admissible which does not rest upon principles known to exist. Sir Isaac Newton would not have been allowed to account for the motion of the heavenly bodies by the principle of gravitation, if he had not first proved its universal existence so far as experiment and observation could prove it. But our ears are daily wearied with the repetition of the blessings to spring from a different and purer form of government, when no such benign government is shown to have ever existed, or to have been found practicable in reality. A better and closer analogy would exist between the line of reasoning applied in physical and political subjects, were some scientific Magazine to recommend the forma-

tion of a beautiful machine, which, unimpeded by the inert nature of matter, or the obstructions of friction, should surprise the world by the exhibition of perpetual motion—for what, in truth, are all the pure and symmetrical forms of government presented to us, but splendid specimens of philosophical ingenuity, in utter disregard of the corruption and passions of mankind?

The insatiable craving for change, under the seductive name of Reform, already calls for further alterations; and long before our new Constitution has reached its teens, the Ballot is demanded. I challenge the innovators to show how its adoption in the United States has prevented corruption.—Here, as usual, their theory and experience are at fault, though one would have hardly thought experience wanted to detect the fallacy of the theory; for it is difficult to comprehend in what the excellence of the Ballot consists, but in the temptation it affords to treachery and falsehood. It will not be pretended that its adoption will prevent canvassing and solicitation; and if the party solicited give a refusal, he may as well do so by an open and manly vote; if he appears to assent and votes dif-

ferently, he lies. The Ballot at once facilitates the commission of fraud, destroys, by rendering a scrutiny impracticable after the election is over, the means of cancelling the fraudulent votes, and screens the perjured from the infamy they so richly merit. At a late election in New York, it was found that there were more votes than voters*. I am not ignorant of certain fancied arrangements for correcting some of these evils, and I am well aware of the exercise of the ballot, in many places in New England, with little to complain of; but the good order is not attributable to the ballot, but the sober character of the people. It is

* The Ballot has certainly been found useful, in America, in removing one of the disqualifications which might otherwise deprive the worthy cause of some of its natural supporters, and enabling them to vote when the tongue could as little articulate the name of the object of their choice as the head discern his qualifications. Instances are not wanting of voters being brought to the poll under the influence of brandy and opium, and their arms supported by their guides to hand in their ticket, when the tongue would have refused to utter the name. Thus, the very means our Reformers would apply to destroy improper influence, is found to make the objects of their care as unconscious a machine as the vessel which receives the ticket, and this should be hailed by men who always push principles to their extremes, as the acmé of perfection in the Ballot. Every concession should be considered not only as to its own merits, but also as to its remote consequences. An estimable commercial friend of mine, but one from whom I essentially differ on all political subjects, observed to me one

the part of a statesman not to institute what *may* work well, but what is not easily susceptible of being made to work ill. Would not those who are so clamorous for the ballot be the first to pervert it, like the mobility of the larger cities of America? A machine is not valuable in the eyes of a practical mechanist, on account of its complex ingenuity, but on account of its doing good work without danger of derangement.

I had intended to have published these extracts anonymously, but some explanation seemed to be required from one who allowed himself to take such license with the works of a deceased author, together with a competent testimony to the genuineness of the sentiments

day, "We want three things, Universal Suffrage, Ballot, and Annual Parliaments; give us one, and we will get the other two." To grant universal suffrage, were to commit the government of the country to the management of men who have no stake in it. Would my friend sell a parcel of goods, much less trust his all, to men who are worth nothing? Annual parliaments, not to mention the incalculable evils consequent on giving an undue influence to the democratic part of the constitution, would keep the country in a perpetual turmoil, and inflict on men of business a most intolerable burden, in the necessity to be constantly engaged in electioneering. There can be no liberty without an infusion of democracy in the constitution, nor a hope of it, under its dominant usurpation. Our reformers would convert the atmosphere into oxygen, and that which was intended for respiration, would become combustion.

as those of an American and Republican. And though I have a pleasure in introducing to the British public the works of a man of no ordinary capacity, my principal object has been to strengthen the hands of the government, whoever may guide the helm of the State. And truly let any Minister now faithfully discharge his duty, resisting the spirit of innovation, when it tends to destruction and not improvement, and he will be well entitled to the warm support of every honest man. His is no bed of roses: a mistake may be fatal. In the present temper of the times the vessel of the State may easily be drawn within the suction of the whirlpool of democracy, wherein there is no stopping, no breathing place, till anarchy has issued in despotism.

The old supports of government seem, unhappily, only to exist in recollection. There was a time when loyalty, like an instinct of self-preservation, made a man recoil from doctrines now daily promulgated, and welcomed by those who ought to know better. There was a time when men valued the actual blessings they enjoyed—when, contrasting their happy lot with that of every other country,

they found prosperity in contentment, instead of encouraging the morbid feeling of seeking out imaginary evils, and decrying old established usages and institutions, because, rough hewn by the practical wisdom of our ancestors, they want the brittle polish of modern conceits*.

* The wide difference that exists between the opinions of our pseudo Reformers and the great advocates of constitutional liberty in America, respecting English institutions, is very striking. After Gouverneur Morris, a senator, had witnessed for a series of years, the working of the American constitution, he thus writes to a friend, respecting the value of an hereditary senate:—

"Perhaps, on impartial inquiry, it may appear that a country is best governed (taking for a standard any long period, such as half a century), when the principal authority is vested in a permanent senate. But there seems little probability that such a body could be established here. Let it be proposed by the best men among us, and it would be considered as a plan for aggrandizing themselves. Experience alone can incline the people to such an institution. That a man should be born a legislator, is now, among unfledged witlings, the frequent subject of ridicule. But Experience, that wrinkled matron, whom genius contemns, and youth abhors; Experience, the mother of wisdom, will tell us, that men destined from the cradle to act an important part, will not, in general, be so unfit as those who are objects of popular choice."

* * * * * * *

"When a general abuse of the right of election shall have robbed our government of respect, and its imbecility have involved it in difficulties, the people will feel what a friend once said, that they want something to protect them against themselves."

The independence of the House of Lords, is, at this moment, the greatest bulwark of British liberty; and any measure

If the day is past when government might avail itself of prejudice for its support,—civil government still remains an ordinance of God; and however ill this may accord with the popular doctrine of kings and ministers being our servants, it is a truth which demagogues may assail, but can never shake. Suicidal will be the act of any government which, in paying court to the passions of the day, shall seek to base authority on any lower foundation. Right reason and right principle always go

which shall impair its efficiency, would, by lodging the supreme power in one body, the Commons, reduce our happily mixed form of government to a mere democracy, and, consequently, establish a tyranny; as, with the exception of popular demagogues, no doubt can exist, that every simple form of government, whether monarchy, oligarchy, or democracy, is tyranny. Have those who so loudly decry hereditary wisdom, ever compared any great constitutional debates of the Lords with those of the Commons, and found them so inferior? They are admitted, on all hands, to be vastly their superiors in regularity and order, for the conduct of business; and, without their intervention, contradictions in Acts of Parliament would be much more frequent.

Neither would the substitution of an elective for an hereditary senate, in any degree, provide against the possibility of collision. During the last session of Congress, the senate and representatives passed resolutions in direct opposition to each other, on a great constitutional question; and if the constitutional barriers, established in the construction of the senate, to guard the outworks of liberty, and to keep each branch of the legislature in its proper place, shall be overthrown, it is difficult to foresee any impediment to the mobocracy of the representatives placing a sceptre in the hands of a dictator.*

hand in hand. The misfortune is, that in spite of all the fulsome flattery daily offered to the superior intelligence of the people, reason has little to do with their opinions. Hoodwinked by prejudice, the mind is fixed on one supposed good, and all the frightful consequences and attendant evils of the proposed change are overlooked. A theory floats in the mind, the idea of self-government captivates the imagination, and men recklessly leap to the conclusion "that it is only necessary to determine how men ought to think, to know how they will act." For a clear elucidation of the tendencies of many of these false and destructive opinions, I confidently appeal to the following pages. There liberty is described as she *can* exist, restraining the vicious, and giving protection to the virtuous. There is shown by arguments, which may be evaded, but have never been, and can never be, answered, "that the moment the physical force of the people is employed to resist, the people themselves become *nothing*. They can only destroy, they cannot rule." In the portrait of the New Romans is exhibited the real tendency of revolutionary principles to fit the people to wear chains, and forge them for other nations. In the faithful picture of Jacobinism

may be traced the living lineaments of Radicalism. Let those who think lightly of change and revolution read their own fate in the epitaphs of the Zimris of old, the horror and bloodshed of the French Revolution, and the comparatively naked quays of Antwerp, which, till the uncalled-for revolution of Belgium, had prospered more than any other continental port since the general peace.

But if the deductions of reason are too slow in their operation to combat with passion, let a principle as active be brought to bear on the public mind. Let the duty of submission, and the guilt and ruin attendant on being given to change, be unflinchingly impressed. If there remains less of attachment and prejudice in favour of existing institutions than was the case during the first French Revolution, there is more of real principle in the country. The only difficulty is to arouse the friends of order, who are naturally of a retiring and unobtrusive disposition, to an active consciousness of the fearful danger which awaits the country, if the reins of government are transferred from men in whose hands they are naturally lodged from their exalted talents and high character and station, to those of noisy demagogues, who,

with liberty on their tongues, would, through licentiousness, prepare the way for military despotism, and give to the winds all that is ancestral or sacred in the land.

"The chief hazard," says our author, "that attends the liberty of any great people, lies in their blindness to the danger. A weak people may descry ruin before it overwhelms them, without any power to retard or repel its advance; but a powerful nation, like our own, can be ruined only by its blindness, that will not see destruction as it comes; or by its apathy and selfishness, that will not stir, though it sees it *."

HENRY EWBANK.

PECKHAM,
January 1st, 1835.

* It is truly lamentable to see at the present awful crisis of the country, some of its most valuable members lending their influence to the cause of insubordination, from a spirit of opposition to the established Church. I would not willingly let a syllable escape me, which should give offence to a conscientious Dissenter. From my heart, I can unite with the Rev. H. Budd, in the truly catholic wish, "Blessed, thrice blessed, "shall that man be in my esteem, whom God shall honour in "uniting his church. I had rather be the happy instrument of "advancing such a cause, though I laid but the smallest stone "in the walls of the temple of peace, than enjoy all the fame of "all the statesmen, and warriors, and philosophers, and poets, "and orators, who, by conferring temporal benefits on their "species, have ever attracted the admiration of mankind." But as little can this consummation so devoutly to be wished be effected by a spirit of rivalry, as civil and religious matters be

disunited by an Act of Parliament. They are, and must be indissolubly connected, so long as they co-exist; and the attempt to separate them is an attack on the religious principle of the country. The principles of this work commend themselves to the favourable consideration of Dissenters, from their proceeding from the pen of a man who looked back with holy pride, if the expression be admissible, on his pious pilgrim ancestry, and are to this day cherished as sacred by the orderly and intelligent descendants of the puritan founders of the country. They are rapidly gaining ground with the intelligent part of the American people, and nothing would more effectually dispel the mist of delusion which hangs over the mind of part of the British community, than to put them in possession, if it were possible, of the experience of America.

The fact of each denomination of Christians having its own theological seminaries and universities, ought to make any right-minded Dissenter pause, before he seeks to establish a common university, and question the policy of wishing to mingle different sects in its management.

Would not the Dissenters to a man repel, with a righteous, burning indignation, the bare surmise that they would unite with a foreign enemy who should land on our coasts? Rather see England bend her neck to a foreign yoke, than witness the plague of infidel radicalism poisoning all her most vital energies? Were England subdued, (a supposition barely conceivable, so long as loyalty warms the breasts of her sons,) oppression would strengthen the bonds of union, and increase attachment to her ancient institutions, the hour of deliverance would come, and England would rise England again; but let the "palpable obscure" of infidel radicalism settle on the land, and if her sons did not become so degraded as to lose all consciousness of degradation, they would have to weep not over the fetters on the limbs, but over the subjugation of soul. A worse than Mohammedan bondage would blight every lovely and generous feeling, and, by strengthening each selfish and vicious propensity, render liberty at once impossible and undesired.

NOTICES

OF

THE LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF

FISHER AMES.

Fisher Ames lived and died in his native place. He was born, April 9, 1758, in the old parish of Dedham, a pleasant country town, about nine miles south of Boston, and the shire-town of Norfolk. He sprung from one of the oldest families in Massachusetts. In the line of his ancestry is the Rev. William Ames, a famous English divine, author of the *Medulla Theologiæ*, and several controversial tracts. He was educated at Christ's College, Cambridge, and to prevent an expulsion in form, on account of his strenuous assertion of Calvinistical principles, he forsook this college, went abroad, and was chosen by the States of Friesland professor of their university. He was at the Synod of Dort, 1618. He had determined to emigrate to New England, but was prevented by death, in November, 1633.

The father of Fisher Ames was a physician, and the son of a physician, who lived in Bridgewater. His mother was daughter of Jeremiah Fisher, Esq., one of the most respectable farmers in the county. Dr. Nathaniel Ames was a man of acuteness and wit, of

great activity, and a cheerful and amiable temper. To his skill in his profession he added a knowledge of natural philosophy, astronomy, and mathematics. He died in July, 1764, leaving four sons and one daughter.

Fisher was the youngest child. When he was six years old, he began the study of Latin. From this time till he entered the university, he had a variety of instructors in succession. He attended the town-school, when the master happened to be capable of teaching him, and at other times recited his lessons to the Rev. Mr. Haven, minister of the parish, a gentleman to whom he always showed much respect and friendship.

His frequent change of instructors, and desultory application to the languages, were obvious disadvantages attending his initiation in classical literature. He did not receive that exact and sedulous culture, which such a mind as his deserved, and would have fully repaid. His native energies, in a good degree, supplied these defects, and carried him forward in the road of improvement. In July, 1770, soon after the completion of his twelfth year, he was admitted to Harvard College. Previous to his being offered, he was examined by a gentleman accustomed to teach the languages, who expressed admiration of his quickness and accuracy, and pronounced him a youth of uncommon attainments and bright promise.

During this period he was remarkable for close application in the hours of study, and for animation and gaiety in the intervals of relaxation. He entered

the university, indeed, at too tender an age for the mind to grasp the abstract sciences. It is said, however, that in the literary exercises in general he was ready and accurate, and in particular branches distinguished. He very soon gained the reputation of shining parts. He was attentive to his studies, and regular in his conduct. Young as he was, he did not abuse his power over that portion of his time, which the laws of the institution submit to the discretion of the student, by idleness and trifling; nor his liberty of self-direction in the choice of his associates, by consorting with the vicious.

It is especially to be told, that the morals of the young collegian passed the ordeal of a four years' residence at the university unhurt. He surmounted the temptations to vice, perhaps inseparable from the place, and left it with an unsullied purity of sentiments and manners.

His spotless youth brought blessings to the whole remainder of his life. It gave him the entire use of his faculties, and all the fruit of his literary education. Its effects appeared in that fine edge of moral feeling which he always preserved; in his strict, and often austere temperance; in his love of occupation, that made activity delight; in his distaste for public diversions, and his preference of simple pleasures. Beginning well, he advanced with unremitted steps in the race of virtue, and arrived at the end of life in peace and honour.

His mother had early directed his views to the study of law. Even before he entered college, and while

there, he had spoken of a profession, and sometimes mentioned divinity or medicine; but she had always aimed to determine his choice to the law, which he adopted as his destined pursuit.

After receiving his degree in 1774, several years passed away before he entered on his professional studies. The straitened situation of his mother, obliged to provide for her other children, the doubtful and troubled aspect of the times, joined to the immaturity of his years, occasioned this delay of his proper occupation. During a part of this interval, he had recourse to that employment, which the school establishments of New England offer to young men of literary education and limited means of support, and which has been the first resort, after leaving college, of many of our distinguished men in all professions.

This period, however, which engaged his services to the community, was not lost to himself. He improved his leisure by indulging his favourite propensity to books. During this time, as he frequently said, he read with avidity, bordering on enthusiasm, almost every author within his reach.

Mr. Ames was a student at law in the office of William Tudor, Esq., of Boston, and commenced practice at Dedham in the autumn of the year 1781. He had already begun to show the "public and private sense of a man." The contest of the States with the parent country awakened in him a lively interest. He espoused their cause, and, though too young to take an active part, watched its progress with patriotic concern. In one instance he was selected for

a public trust, which he discharged with an ability beyond his years.

In the convention for ratifying the federal constitution, in 1788, he became conspicuous. The importance of the subject elevated and warmed his mind. It was a decision on the question, whether his country should exhibit the awful spectacle of a people without a government. Within a few days after the opening of the Convention, he delivered the speech on Biennial Elections; and though its merit has been exceeded by his speeches since, its effect was uncommonly great. He showed that his opinion was then formed, that the principal danger to liberty in republics arose from popular factions. A democracy, said he, is a volcano, which conceals the fiery materials of its own destruction. He touched and illuminated other parts of the constitution in speeches, of which imperfect sketches only are preserved.

He was chosen a member of the House of Representatives in the State Legislature, which assembled, May, 1788. Here he was active in some important measures. He was a zealous advocate of our town-schools, as institutions calculated to elevate the character of the great body of the people, and to increase their enjoyments. In a political view, he thought the education gained in these places would do more good by resisting delusion, than evil by furnishing means and incentives to ambition. In this legislature he took the lead in procuring the law, which placed our schools upon the present improved establishment.

Such was the impression that the talents and cha-

racter of Mr. Ames had made on the public mind, that he was selected by the friends of the new government to be one of its conductors and guardians. He was chosen the first representative to Congress from the Suffolk District, which included the capital of the State.

During eight years, the whole of Washington's administration, Mr. Ames was a member of the House of Representatives. Here, in the collision of active and powerful minds, in the consideration of questions of the highest moment, in the agitation of interests that included all our political good, he acted a principal part. This is not the place to explain the principles or merits of this administration. In praise of Washington, not with any thought of compliment to himself, Mr. Ames has observed: "that government was administered with such integrity, without mystery, and in so prosperous a course, that it seemed wholly employed in acts of beneficence."

In the course of this period the civil departments of the government were established; adequate provisions were made for the administration of justice, the maintenance of credit, and the final payment of a large floating debt; a system of internal taxation, which should be independent of the contingencies of foreign commerce, was matured and carried into effect; the Indian tribes, by a wise and humane system, combining justice and force, were made permanent friends; a dangerous insurrection was suppressed; our differences with Spain and Great Britain were accommodated, and from the latter honourable recompense

was obtained for injuries; the country was rescued from the extreme peril of having its destinies mingled with those of France, and its fortune placed at her disposal. A multitude of subordinate interests, individual and public, came within the care of government. Nerves were given to industry, and life to commerce. The oil of gladness brightened the face of labour, and the whole country wore the smile of prosperity.

In the duties of patriotism which were so successfully performed, Mr. Ames had a distinguished share. On every important question he took an active and responsible part. He gave all his time and all his powers to the public business. The efforts of such men were the more necessary, because the government had to maintain its measures against a party, whose zeal was inextinguishable, and activity incessant; and who obstructed every operation to the utmost of their power.

At the close of the session, in the spring of 1796, Mr. Ames travelled into Virginia for his health. In this visit he was an object of the most friendly and respectful attention, individual and public.

At this time, the college of New Jersey expressed their estimation of his public character, by conferring on him the degree of Doctor of Laws.

He gained sufficient health to be able to attend the next session of congress, and to enter into business, though not with all his usual spirit. He was chairman of the committee, which reported the answer to the president's speech. This answer contained a most

affectionate and respectful notice of the president's declaration, that he now stood for the last time in their presence. In conclusion it said: "for your country's sake, for the sake of republican liberty, it is our earnest wish, that your example may be the guide of your successors, and thus, after being the ornament and safeguard of the present age, become the patrimony of our descendants." In the debate on this answer, he vindicated, with his accustomed openness and ability, the claim of Washington to the unqualified love and gratitude of the nation.

The session being terminated, Mr. Ames, who had previously declined another election, became a private citizen. He retired to his favourite residence at Dedham, to enjoy repose in the bosom of his family, and to unite with his practice as a lawyer, those rural occupations in which he delighted. He applied to the management of his farm and fruitery, a portion of that ingenuity and activity, which he had bestowed on affairs of state. The excitability of his mind, made him interested in whatever he undertook. The desire of usefulness, and a spirit of improvement, directed all his plans and exertions. He resumed his practice, and appeared in important causes. He purposed to revise his law-studies, and, for the sake of his family, to make a business of his profession; but he found the labours of the bar too severe a trial of his constitution, and after a few years, gradually relinquished this employment.

He also found it impossible to withdraw his mind from politics. That eventful period in 1798, when

the spirit of the nation co-operated with the firmness of the administration, in repelling the accumulated aggressions and reiterated indignities of France, revived and animated all his public sympathies. When the next year he perceived the reaction of the opposing party threatening to overpower the government, he wrote Laocoon and other pieces, to restore the tone, to rekindle the zeal, to disturb the security, and shake the presumption of the federalists. "Our wisdom," says he, "framed a government, and committed it to our virtue to keep; but our passions have engrossed it, and have armed our vices to maintain the usurpation."

He had often said, that the government was maintained by efforts which would tire or be overpowered. He had seen, that it was attacked with unremitting fury, whilst the defence was irregular, inconstant and feeble.

To secure the country against the worst consequences which this change portended, and which he feared, though retarded, must soon begin to take place, he thought the presses should be sedulously employed by federal writers. He said, he did not expect by this means to make all the people politicians, or acute judges of men and measures, but to assist those who have influence over the opinions of the many to think correctly on our affairs, and, particularly, to disabuse their mind of the false theories of democracy. He did not calculate to restore the sceptre to federalism; but to use his own expression, he hoped, "to have the wise, and good,

and the owners of the country, a watchful minority, who, though they may be overcome, will not be deluded, and will save all that can be saved."

He began from this time, and continued for two years to be a diligent writer of political essays. He then suspended his labour, but resumed it afterwards, and never entirely abandoned it, while he could hold his pen. These productions treat of subjects on which he had bestowed much thought and research, and which he had often discussed in conversation with his friends. They were written, however, always with great rapidity; often in the short intervals of a busy day, on a journey, at an inn, or in a court-house. They show his insight into human nature, and his knowledge of the character of democracy. They afford a strong proof of his ability to foresee the effects of political causes.

Foreign politics, both as affecting our own, and as interesting to humanity, passed under his pen. He beheld, he said, in the French revolution, a "despotism of the mob or the military from the first, and hypocrisy of morals to the last." The policy, the principles, and the power of France in all its forms before the creation of the new dynasty, and under the present system of universal empire, always appeared to him big with danger to the liberty of the world. The partiality to France in the national feelings of Americans, he regarded as having a tendency at all times to corrupt and pervert American politics. Nothing can exceed the interest with which he watched the efforts of Great Britain against the all-

conquering and eccentric ambition of France; not only because he was just to the British nation and character; but, because he saw, that all our hopes of independence were staked upon the issue.

On all these subjects Mr. Ames was awake, while many others slept. What they saw obscurely, he saw clearly. What to them was distant, affected him as near. The admission of danger implies duty; and many refuse to be alarmed, because they wish to be at ease. The despondent think nothing *can* be done; the presumptuous nothing *need* be done. Considering these facts and opinions, Mr. Ames's writings will be acknowledged to have produced much effect.

In the year 1804, Mr. Ames was chosen president of Harvard College. His health would not have allowed him to accept the place, had other reasons permitted. Though greatly interested in the education of the young, he did not think his habits adapted to the office, and therefore declined the honour.

From 1795, his health continued to decline, with partial and flattering intermissions, until his death. He expired on the morning of the fourth of July, 1808. When the intelligence reached Boston, a meeting of citizens was held, with a view to testify their respect for his character and services. In compliance with their request, his remains were brought to the capital for interment, at which an eulogy was pronounced by his early friend, Mr. Dexter, and every mark of respectful notice was paid.

His early love of books has been mentioned; and

he retained and cherished the same propensity through his whole life. He was particularly fond of ethical studies; but he went more deeply into history, than any other branch of learning. Here he sought the principles of legislation, the science of politics, the causes of the rise and decline of nations, and the character and passions of men acting in public affairs. He read Herodotus, Thucydides, Livy, Tacitus, Plutarch, and the modern historians of Greece and Rome. The English history he studied with much care. Hence he possessed a great fund of historical knowledge, always at command both for conversation and writing. He contemplated the character of Cicero, as an orator and statesman, with fervent admiration.

He never ceased to be a lover of the poets. Homer, in Pope, he often perused; and read Virgil in the original, within two years of his death, with increased delight. His knowledge of the French, enabled him to read their authors, though not to speak their language. He was accustomed to read the Scriptures, not only as containing a system of truth and duty, but as displaying in their poetical parts, all that is sublime, animated, and affecting in composition. His learning seldom appeared as such, but was interwoven with his thoughts, and became his own.

The political principles and opinions of Mr. Ames. are not difficult to be understood, and should be attentively regarded by those who will estimate the merit of his labours. Mr. Ames was emphatically a republican. He saw, that many persons confounded

a republic with a democracy. He considered them as essentially distinct, and really opposite. According to his creed, a republic is that structure of an elective government, in which the administration necessarily prescribe to themselves the general good as the object of all their measures; a democracy is that, in which the present popular passions, independent of the public good, become a guide to the rulers. In the first, the reason and interests of the society govern; in the second, their prejudices and passions. The frame of the American constitution, supposes the dangers of democracy. The division of the legislature into two branches, and their diverse origin, the long duration of office in one branch, the distinct power of the executive, the independence and permanency of the judiciary, are designed to balance and check the democratic tendencies of our polity. They are contrivances and devices voluntarily adopted by the people, to restrain themselves from obstructing, by their own mistakes or perversity, the attainment of the public welfare. They are professed means of ensuring to the nation, rulers, who will prefer the durable good of the whole, to the transient advantage of the whole or a part. When these provisions become ineffectual, and the legislator, the executive magistrate, and the judge, become the instruments of the passions of the people, or of the governing majority, the government, whatever may be its form, is a democracy, and the public liberty is no longer safe. True republican rulers are bound to act, not simply as those who appoint them *would*, but, as they *ought;* demo-

cratic leaders will act in subordination to those very passions which it is the object of government to control; but as the effect of this subserviency is to procure them unlimited confidence and devotedness, the powers of society become concentrated in their hands. Then it is, that men, not laws, govern. Nothing can be more inconsistent with the real liberty of the people, than the power of the democracy thus brought into action. For in this case, the government is a despotism beyond rule, not a republic confined to rule. It is strong, but its strength is of a terrible sort; strong to oppress, not to protect; not strong to maintain liberty, property, and right, it cannot secure justice, nor make innocence safe.

Mr. Ames apprehended, that our government had been sliding down from a true republic towards the abyss of democracy; and that the ambition of demagogues operating on personal, party, and local passions, was attaining its objects. Hence the stress he laid on the principles, habits, and institutions that pertain to the New England state of society. "Constitutions," said he, "are but paper; society is the substratum of government. The New England state of society, is the best security to us, and, mediately, to the United States, for a government favourable to liberty and order. The chance of these is almost exclusively from their morals, knowledge, manners, and equal diffusion of property, added to town governments and clergy; all circumstances inestimable."

His delicate mind and amiable temper, made the contests of his public station often irksome. Though

he did not allow himself to complain, yet he sometimes felt these irritations with much sensibility. "The value of friends," he observes, "is the most apparent and highest rated by those who mingle in the conflicts of political life. The sharp contests for little points wound the mind, and the ceaseless jargon of hypocrisy overpowers the faculties. I turn from scenes which provoke and disgust me, to the contemplation of the interest I have in private life, and to the pleasures of society with those friends whom I have so much reason to esteem."

He did not, however, turn his eyes from the favourable side of his situation. "There is a vexation in public cares, but these cares awaken curiosity; an active interest in the event of measures, which gradually becomes the habit of a politician's soul. Besides, the society of worthy and distinguished men, whose virtues and characters are opened and coloured by the sympathy of united efforts, is no mean compensation." His health, and perhaps his life, were the costly oblations which he laid on the altar of patriotism. The fine machinery of his system could ill withstand the excitement produced by public speaking, and his keen interest in public affairs.

It is happy for mankind, when those who engage admiration, deserve esteem; for vice and folly derive a pernicious influence from an alliance with qualities that naturally command applause. In the character of Mr. Ames the circle of the virtues seemed to be complete, and each virtue in its proper place.

The objects of religion presented themselves with a

strong interest to his mind. The relation of the world to its Author, and of this life to a retributory scene in another, could not be contemplated by him without the greatest solemnity. The religious sense was, in his view, essential in the constitution of man. He placed a full reliance on the divine origin of Christianity. He was no enemy to improvement, to fair inquiry, and Christian freedom; but innovations in the modes of worship and instruction, without palpable necessity or advantage, he discouraged, as tending to break the salutary associations of the pious mind. His conversation and behaviour evinced the sincerity of his religious impressions. No levity upon these subjects, ever escaped his lips; but his manner of recurring to them in conversation indicated reverence and feeling. The sublime, the affecting character of Christ, he never mentioned without emotion.

Mr. Ames was married, July 15th, 1792, to Frances, third daughter of John Worthington, Esq., of Springfield. He left seven children, six of whom are sons. As a husband and father, he was all that is provident, kind, and exemplary.

Chapter I.

DEMOCRATIC ASCENDANCY, DESTRUCTIVE OF LIBERTY, AND ALL HOPE OF ITS RESTORATION*.

At a time when men eminently wise cherish almost any hopes, however vain, because they choose to be blind to their fears, it would be neither extraordinary nor disreputable for me to mistake the degree of maturity, to which our political vices have arrived, nor to err in computing how near or how far off we stand from the term of their fatal consummation.

I fear, that the future fortunes of our country no longer depend on *counsel*. We have persevered in our errors too long to change our propensities by now enlightening our convictions. The political sphere, like the globe we tread upon, never stands still, but with a silent swiftness accomplishes the revolutions, which, we are too ready to believe, are effected by our wisdom, or might have been controlled by our efforts. There is a kind of fatality in the affairs of free states, that eludes the foresight of the wise, as much as

* The title of this dissertation in the American edition, is "the Dangers of American Liberty," and as it was written in 1805, after the author had been engaged for the previous twenty years in carefully watching the progress of political events, and his judgment had had full time to mature, it is manifest that all hope of the maintenance of the Republic as the ark of liberty had died within him. Subsequent events have fully confirmed the almost historic accuracy of Mr. Ames' prophetic view; particularly those of the last few years.

It is but justice to the author to remark, that in transmitting this treatise to a friend for perusal, he observes, "You will see

it frustrates the toils and sacrifices of the patriot and the hero. Events proceed, not as they were expected or intended, but as they are impelled by the irresistible laws of our political existence. Things inevitable happen, and we are astonished, as if they were miracles, and the course of nature had been overpowered or suspended to produce them. Hence it is, that, till lately, more than half our countrymen believed our public tranquillity was firmly established, and that our liberty did not merely rest upon dry land, but was wedged, or rather rooted high above the flood, in the rocks of granite, as immoveably as the pillars that prop the universe. They, or at least the discerning of them, are at length no less disappointed than terrified, to perceive that we have all the time floated, with a fearless and unregarded course, down the stream of events, till we are now visibly drawn within the suction of a revolutionary Niagara, and every thing that is liberty will be dashed to pieces in the descent.

We have been accustomed to consider the pretension of Englishmen to be free, as a proof how completely they were broken to subjection, or hardened in impos-

many deficiencies and faults. The conclusion is incomplete. It is an effusion from the mind of stock that was laid up in it without any resort to books; of course it wants more facts, more illustration, more exact method, to change its aspect of declamation and rhetorical flourish into a business-performance."

The corrections of his master-hand it never received; nor was it published till after his decease; but, if it failed to obtain his finishing touch, it is not the less valuable in presenting a faithful picture of his views and experience, and is like a valuable admonition and legacy from a dying patriarch of the great cause of freedom, to all who would not blindly fool away the blessings of constitutional liberty.

ture. We have insisted, that they had no constitution, because they never made one; and that their boasted government, which is just what time and accident have made it, was palsied with age, and blue with the plague-sores of corruption. We have believed, that it derived its stability, not from reason, but from prejudice; that it is supported, not because it is favourable to liberty, but as it is dear to national pride; that it is reverenced, not for its excellence, but because ignorance is naturally the idolater of antiquity; that it is not sound and healthful, but derives a morbid energy from disease, and an unaccountable aliment from the canker that corrodes its vitals.

But we maintained, that the federal constitution, with all the bloom of youth, and splendour of innocence, was gifted with immortality. For, if time should impair its force, or faction tarnish its charms, the people, ever vigilant to discern its wants, ever powerful to provide for them, would miraculously restore it to the field, like some wounded hero of the epic, to take a signal vengeance on its enemies, or like Antæus, invigorated by touching his mother earth, to rise the stronger for a fall.

There is, of course, a large portion of our citizens, who will not believe, even on the evidence of facts, that any public evils exist, or are impending. They deride the apprehensions of those who foresee, that licentiousness will prove, as it ever has proved, fatal to liberty. They consider her as a nymph, who need not be coy to keep herself pure, but that, on the contrary, her chastity will grow robust by frequent scuffles with her seducers. They say, while a faction is a minority, it will remain harmless by being outvoted; and if it should become a majority, all its

acts, however profligate or violent, are then legitimate. For, with the democrats, the people is a sovereign who can do no wrong, even when he respects and spares no existing right, and whose voice, however obtained, or however counterfeited, bears all the sanctity and all the force of a living divinity.

Is it possible, they ask, that the people should ever be their own enemies? If all government were dissolved to-day, would they not re-establish it to-morrow, with no other prejudice to the public liberty, than some superfluous fears of its friends, some abortive projects of its enemies? Nay, would not liberty rise resplendent with the light of fresh experience, and coated in the seven-fold mail of constitutional amendments?

These opinions are fiercely maintained, not only as if there were evidence to prove them, but as if it were a merit to believe them, by men who tell you, that, in the most desperate extremity of faction or usurpation, we have an unfailing resource in the *good sense of the nation.* They assure us there is at least as much wisdom *in the people*, as in these ingenious tenets of their creed.

For any purpose, therefore, of popular use or general impression, it seems almost fruitless to discuss the question, whether our public liberty can subsist, and what is to be the condition of that awful futurity to which we are hastening. The clamours of party are so loud, and the resistance of national vanity is so stubborn, it will be impossible to convince any but the very wise, (and in every state they are the very few) that democratic liberty is utterly untenable; that we are devoted to the successive struggles of factions, who will rule by turns, the worst of whom

will rule last, and triumph by the sword. But for the wise, this unwelcome task is, perhaps, superfluous: they, possibly, are already convinced.

All such men are, or ought to be, agreed, that simple governments are despotisms; and of all despotisms, a democracy, though the least durable, is the most violent. It is also true, that all the existing governments we are acquainted with, are more or less *mixed*, or balanced and checked, however imperfectly, by the ingredients and principles that belong to the other simple sorts. Without pretending to define liberty, which writers at length agree is incapable of any precise and comprehensive definition, all the European governments, except the British, admit a most formidable portion of arbitrary power; whereas, in America, no plan of government, without a large and preponderating commixture of democracy, can, for a moment, possess our confidence and attachment.

It is unquestionable, that the concern of the people in the affairs of such a government, tends to elevate the character and enlarge the comprehension, as well as the enjoyments of the citizens; and, supposing the government wisely constituted, and the laws steadily and firmly carried into execution, these effects, in which every lover of mankind must exult, will not be attended with a corresponding depravation of the public manners and morals. I have never yet met with an American of any party, who seemed willing to exclude the people from their temperate and well-regulated share of concern in the government.

The danger in its formation obviously was, that a species of government in which the people choose all the rulers, and then, by themselves, or ambitious

demagogues pretending to be the people, claim and exercise an effective control over what is called the government, would be found on trial no better than a turbulent and licentious democracy. The danger was, that their best interests would be neglected, their dearest rights violated, their sober reason silenced, and the worst passions of the worst men not only freed from legal restraint, but invested with public power. The known propensity of a democracy is to licentiousness, which the ambitious call, and the ignorant believe to be, liberty.

The great object, then, of political wisdom in framing our constitution, was to guard against licentiousness, that inbred malady of democracies, that deforms their infancy with gray hairs and decrepitude.

The project of arranging states in a federal union, has long been deemed by able writers and statesmen more promising than the scheme of a single republic. The experiment, it has been supposed, has not yet been fairly tried; and much has been expected from the example of America.

If states were neither able nor inclined to obstruct the federal union, much, indeed, might be hoped from such a confederation. But it may, and in America, does happen, that some states are of an extent sufficient to form potent monarchies, and, of course, are too powerful, as well as too proud, to be *subjects* of the federal laws.

There never has existed a federal union, in which the leading states were not ambitious to rule, and did not endeavour to rule by fomenting factions in the small states, and thus engross the management of the federal concerns. Hence it was, that Sparta, at the head of the Peloponnesus, filled all Greece with terror

and dissension. In every city she had an aristocratical party to kill or to banish the popular faction, that was devoted to her rival, Athens; so that each city was inhabited by two hostile nations, whom no laws of war could control, no leagues or treaties bind.

Sometimes Athens, sometimes Sparta, took the ascendant, and influenced the decrees of the famous Amphictyonic council, the boasted federal head of the Grecian republics. But at all times that head was wholly destitute of authority, except when violent and sanguinary measures were dictated to it by some preponderant member. The small states were immediately reduced to an absolute nullity, and were subject to the most odious of all oppressions, the domination of one state over another state.

The Grecian states, forming the Amphictyonic league, composed the most illustrious federal republic that ever existed. Its dissolution and ruin were brought about by the operation of the principles and passions that are inherent in all such associations. The Thebans, one of the leading states, uniting with the Thessalians, both animated by jealousy and resentment against the Phocians, procured a decree of the council of the Amphictyons, where their joint influence predominated, condemning the Phocians to a heavy fine for some pretended sacrilege they had committed on the lands consecrated to the temple of Delphi. Finding the Phocians, as they expected and wished, not inclined to submit, by a second decree they devoted their lands to the god of that temple, and called upon all Greece to arm in their *sacred* cause, for so they affected to call it. A contest thus began, which was doubly sanguinary, because it combined the characters of a religious and civil war, and

raged for more than ten years. In the progress of it, the famous Philip of Macedon found means to introduce himself as a party; and the nature of his measures, as well as their final success, is an everlasting warning to all federal republics. He appears from the first moment of his reign to have *planned* the subjugation of Greece; and in two and twenty years he accomplished his purpose.

If, in the nature of things, there could be any experience, which would be extensively instructive, but our own, all history lies open for our warning, open like a church-yard, all whose lessons are solemn, and chiseled for eternity in the hard stone, lessons that whisper,—O! that they could thunder to our patriots,—"Your passions and vices forbid you to be free."

But experience, though she teaches wisdom, teaches it too late. The most signal events pass away unprofitably for the generation in which they occur, till at length a people, deaf to the things that belong to its peace, is destroyed or enslaved, because it will not be instructed.

There are few, even among those who are alive to the dangers of democracy, who yet allow themselves to view the progress of licentiousness as so speedy, so sure, and so fatal, as the deplorable experience of our country shows that it is, and the evidence of history and the constitution of human nature demonstrate that it must be.

The truth is, such an opinion admitted, with all the terrible light of its proof, no less shocks our fears than our vanity, no less disturbs our quiet than our prejudices. We are summoned by the tocsin to every perilous and painful duty. Our days are made heavy

with the pressure of anxiety, and our nights restless with visions of horror. We listen to the clank of chains, and overhear the whispers of assassins. We mark the barbarous dissonance of mingled rage and triumph in the yell of an infatuated mob; we see the dismal glare of their burnings, and scent the loathsome steam of human victims offered in sacrifice.

These reflections may account for the often-lamented blindness, as well as apathy of our well-disposed citizens. Who would choose to study the tremendous records of the fates, or to remain long in the dungeon of the furies? Who, that is penetrating enough to foresee our scarcely hidden destiny, is hardy enough to endure its anxious contemplation?

It may not long be more safe to disturb, than it is easy to enlighten the democratic faith in regard to our political propensities, since it will neither regard what is obvious, nor yield to the impression of events, even after they have happened. The thoughtless and ignorant care for nothing but the *name* of liberty, which is as much the *end* as the instrument of party, and equally fills up the measure of their comprehension and desires. According to the conception of such men, the public liberty can never perish: it will enjoy immortality, like the dead in the memory of the living. We have heard the French prattle about its rights, and seen them swagger in the fancied possession of its distinctions, long after they were crushed by the weight of their chains. The Romans were not only amused, but really made vain, by the boast of their liberty, while they sweated and trembled under the despotism of emperors, the most odious monsters that ever infested the earth. It is remarkable, that Cicero, with all his dignity and good sense, found it a popular

seasoning of his harangue, six years *after* Julius Cæsar had established a monarchy, and only six months *before* Octavius totally subverted the commonwealth, to say; "It is not possible for the people of Rome to be slaves, whom the gods have destined to the command of all nations. Other nations may endure slavery, but the proper end and business of the Roman people is liberty."

This very opinion in regard to the destinies of *our* country is neither less extensively diffused, nor less solidly established. Such men will persist in thinking our liberty cannot be in danger till it be irretrievably lost. It is even the *boast* of multitudes, that our system of government rests wholly on the popular will.

What is there left, that can check its excesses or retard the velocity of its fall? Are we to be sheltered by the force of ancient manners? Will this be sufficient to control the two evil spirits of license and innovation? Are our civil and religious institutions to stand so firmly, as to sustain themselves and so much of the fabric of the public order as is propped by their support? On the contrary do we not find the popular leaders in avowed hostility to our religious institutions? We are changing, and, if democracy triumphs, it is to be apprehended, that in a few years we shall be as prone to disclaim our great progenitors, as they, if they should return again to the earth, with grief and shame to disown their degenerate descendants.

Is the turbulence of our democracy to be restrained by preferring to the legislature only the grave and upright, the men who profess the best moral and religious principles, and whose lives bear testimony in favour of their profession, whose virtues inspire

confidence, whose services gratitude, and whose talents command admiration? Such legislators would add dignity to the best government, and disarm the malignity of the worst. But the bare moving of this question will be understood as a sarcasm by men of both parties. The powers of impudence itself are scarcely adequate to say, that we have chosen such men only. The atrocities of a distinguished tyrant might provoke satire to string his bow, and with the arrow of Philoctetes to inflict the immedicable wound. We have no Juvenal; and if we had, he would scorn to dissect the vice that wants firmness for the knife, to elevate that he might hit his object, and to dignify low profligacy to be the vehicle of a loathsome immortality.

It never has happened in the world, and it never will, that a democracy has been kept out of the control of the fiercest and most turbulent spirits in the society; they will breathe into it all their own fury, and make it subservient to the worst designs of the worst men.

Although it does not appear, that the science of good government has made any advances since the invention of printing, it is, nevertheless, the opinion of many, that this art has risen, like another sun in the sky, to shed new light and joy on the political world. The press, however, has left the understanding of the mass of men just where it found it; but, by supplying an endless stimulus to their imagination and passions, it has rendered their temper and habits infinitely worse. It has inspired ignorance with presumption, so that those who cannot be governed by reason, are no longer to be awed by authority. The many, who, before the art of printing, never mistook

in a case of oppression, because they complained from their actual sense of it, have become susceptible of every transient enthusiasm, and of more than womanish fickleness of caprice. Public affairs are transacted now on a *stage*, where all the interest and passions grow out of fiction, or are inspired by the art, and often controlled at the pleasure, of the actors. The press is a new and, certainly, a powerful agent in human affairs. It *will* change societies, but it is difficult to conceive how, by rendering men indocile and presumptuous, it *can* change them for the better. They are pervaded by its heat, and kept for ever restless by its activity. While it has impaired the force that every just government can employ in self-defence, it has imparted to its enemies the secret of that wildfire, that blazes with the most consuming fierceness on attempting to quench it.

Shall we, then, be told, that the press will constitute an adequate check to the progress of every species of tyranny? Is it to be denied, that the press has been the base and venal instrument of the very men whom it ought to gibbet to universal abhorrence? Or, while it is confessed that the majority of citizens form their ideas of men and measures almost solely from the light that reaches them through the magic-lantern of the press, do our comforters still depend on the all-restoring, all-preserving power of general *information?* and are they not destitute of all *this*, or rather of any better information themselves, if they can urge this vapid nonsense in the midst of a yet spreading political delusion, in the midst of the "palpable obscure" that settles on the land, from believing what is false, and misconstruing what is true? Can they believe all this, when they

consider how much truth is impeded by party on its way to the public understanding, and even after having reached it, how much it still falls short of its proper mark, while it leaves the envious, jealous, vindictive will unconquered?

Our mistake, and in which we choose to persevere, because our vanity shrinks from the detection, is, that in political affairs, by only determining what men ought to think, we are sure how they will act; and when we know the facts, and are assiduous to collect and present the evidence, we dupe ourselves with the expectation, that, as there is but one result which wise men can believe, there is but one course of conduct deduced from it, which honest men can approve or pursue. We forget, that in framing the judgment every passion is both an advocate and a witness. We lay out of our account, how much essential information there is, that never reaches the multitude, and of the mutilated portion that does, how much is unwelcome to party prejudice; and, therefore, that they may still maintain their opinions, they withold their attention. We seem to suppose, while millions raise so loud a cry about their sovereign power, and really concentre both their faith and their affections in party, that the bulk of mankind will regard no counsels, but such as are suggested by their conscience. Let us dare to speak out; is there any single despot who avowedly holds himself so superior to its dictates?

But *our manners are too mild*, they tell us, for a democracy—then democracy will change those manners. *Our morals are too pure*—then it will corrupt them.

What, then, is the necessary conclusion from the

view we have taken of the insufficiency or extinction of all conceivable checks? It is such as ought to strike terror, but will scarcely raise public curiosity.

Is it not possible, then, it will be asked, to write and argue down opinions that are so mischievous and only plausible, and men who are even more profligate than exalted? Thus it is, that we resolve to perpetuate our own delusions, and to cherish our still frustrated and confuted hopes. *Let only ink enough be shed, and let democracy rage, there will be no blood.* Though the evil is fixed in our nature, all, we think, will be safe, because we fancy we can see a remedy floating in our opinions.

It is, undoubtedly, a salutary labour, to diffuse among the citizens of a free state, as far as the thing is possible, a just knowledge of their public affairs. But the difficulty of this task is augmented exactly in proportion to the freedom of the state; for the more free the citizens, the bolder and more profligate will be their demagogues, the more numerous and eccentric the popular errors, and the more vehement and pertinacious the passions that defend them.

Yet, as if there were neither vice nor passion in the world, one of the loudest boasts of the democrats, one of the dearest of all the tenets of their creed is, that they are a sovereign people, *self-governed*—it would be nearer truth to say, *self-conceited.* For in what sense is it true, that any people, however free, are self-governed? If they have in fact no government, but such as comports with their ever-varying and often inordinate desires, then it is anarchy; if it counteracts those desires, it is compulsory. The individual, who is left to act according to his own humour, is not governed at all;

and if any considerable number, and especially any combination of individuals, find or can place themselves in this situation, then the society is no longer free. For liberty obviously consists in the salutary restraint, and not in the uncontrolled indulgence of such humours. Now of all desires, none will so much need restraint, or so impatiently endure it, as those of the *ambitious*, who will form factions, first to elude, then to rival, and finally to usurp, the powers of the state; and of the *sons of vice*, who are the enemies of law, because no just law can be their friend. The first want to govern the state; and the others, that the state should not govern them. A sense of common interest will soon incline these two original factions of every free state to coalesce into one.

So far as men are swayed by authority, or impelled or excited by their fears and affections, they naturally search for some *persons* as the sources and objects of these effects and emotions. It is pretty enough to say, the public weal commands, and the love of the public weal dictates obedience to the heart of every citizen. This is system, but is it nature? The public weal is a creature of fiction; it is everybody in the fancy, but nobody in the *heart*. Love, to be any thing, must be select and exclusive. We may as well talk of loving geometry as the commonwealth. Accordingly, there are many who seldom try to reason, and are the most misled when they do. Such men are, of necessity, governed by their prejudices. They neither comprehend nor like any thing of a free government, but their party and their leaders. These last are persons, capable of meriting, at least of knowing and rewarding, their zeal and exertions.

Hence it is, that the patriotism of a great mass of people is often nothing more than a blind trust in certain favourites, and a no less blind and still more furious hatred of their enemies. Thus, a free society, by the very nature of liberty, is often ranged into rival factions, who mutually practise and suffer delusion by the abuse of the best names, but who really contend for nothing but the pre-eminence of their leaders.

In a democracy, the elevation of an *equal* convinces many, if not all, that the height to which he is raised is not inaccessible. Ambition wakes from its long sleep in every soul, and wakes, like one of Milton's fallen angels, to turn its tortures into weapons against the public order. The multitude behold their favourite with eyes of love and wonder; and with the more of both, as he is a *new* favourite, and owes his greatness wholly to their favour. Who among the little does not swell into greatness, when he thus reflects, that he has assisted to make *great* men? And who of the popular favourites loses a minute to flatter this vanity in every brain, till it turns it?

The late equals of the new-made chief behold his rise with very different emotions. They view him near, and have long been accustomed to look behind the disguises of his hypocrisy. They know his vices and his foibles, and that the foundations of his fame are as false and hollow as his professions. Nevertheless, it may be their interest or their necessity to serve him for a time. But the instant they can supplant him, they will spare neither intrigues nor violence to effect it. Thus, a democratic system in its very nature teems with faction and revolution. Yet, though it continually tends to shift its head, its character is immutable. Its constancy is in change.

The theory of a democracy supposes, that the will of the people ought to prevail, and that, as the majority possess not only the better right, but the superior force, of course, it will prevail. A greater force, they argue, will inevitably overcome a less. When a constitution provides, with an imposing solemnity of detail, for the collection of the opinions of a majority of the citizens, every sanguine reader not only becomes assured, that the will of the people must prevail, but he goes further, and refuses to examine the reasons, and to excuse the *incivism* and presumption of those who can doubt of this inevitable result. Yet common sense and our own recent experience have shown, that a combination of a very small minority can effectually defeat the authority of the national will. The votes of a majority may sometimes, though not invariably, show what ought to be done; but to awe or subdue the force of a thousand men, the government must call out the superior force of two thousand men. It is, therefore, established the very instant it is brought to the test, that the mere will of a majority is inefficient and without authority. And as to employing a superior force to procure obedience, which a democratic government has an undoubted right to do, and so, indeed, has every other, it is obvious, that the admitted necessity of this resort completely overthrows all the boasted advantages of the democratic system. For, if obedience cannot be procured by reason, it must be obtained by compulsion; and this is exactly what every other government will do in a like case.

Still, however, the friends of the democratic theory will maintain, that this dire resort to force will be exceedingly rare, because the public reason will be more clearly expressed and more respectfully under-

stood, than under any other form of government. The citizens will be, of course, self-governed, as it will be their choice as well as duty to obey the laws. Let us examine the truth of this position.

It has been already remarked, that the refusal of a very small minority to obey, will render force necessary. It has been also noted, that, as every mass of people will inevitably desire a favourite, and fix their trust and affections upon one, it clearly follows, that there will be, of course, a faction opposed to the public will, as expressed in the laws. Now, if a faction is once admitted to exist in a State, the disposition and the means to obstruct the laws, or, in other words, the will of the majority, must be perceived to exist also. If, then, it be true, that a democratic government is of all the most liable to faction, which no man of sense will deny, it is manifest, that it is, from its very nature, obliged more than any other government to resort to force to overcome or awe the power of faction. This latter will continually employ its own power, that acts always against the physical force of the nation, which can be brought to act only in extreme cases, and then, like every extreme remedy, aggravates the evil. For, let it be noted, a regular government by overcoming an unsuccessful insurrection becomes stronger; but elective rulers can scarcely ever employ the physical force of a democracy, without turning the moral force, or the power of opinion, against the government. So that faction is not unfrequently made to triumph from its own defeats, and to avenge, in the disgrace and blood of magistrates, the crime of their fidelity to the laws.

As the boastful pretensions of the democratic system cannot be too minutely exposed, another consideration must be given to the subject.

That government certainly deserves no honest man's love or support, which, from the very laws of its being, carries terror and danger to the virtuous, and arms the vicious with authority and power. The essence and, in the opinion of many thousands not yet cured of their delusions, the *excellence* of democracy is, that it invests every citizen with an equal proportion of power. A state consisting of a million of citizens has a million sovereigns, each of whom detests all other sovereignty but his own. This very boast implies as much of the spirit of turbulence and insubordination, as the utmost energy of any known regular government, even the most rigid, could keep in restraint. It also implies a state of agitation, that is justly terrible to all who love their ease, and of instability, that quenches the last hope of those who would transmit their liberty to posterity. Waving any further pursuit of these reflections, let it be resumed, that, if every man of the million has his rateable share of power in the community, then, instead of restraining the *vicious*, *they* also are armed with power, for they take their part: as they are citizens, this cannot be refused them. Now, as they have an interest in preventing the execution of the laws, which, in fact, is the apparent common interest of their whole class, their union will happen of course. The very first moment that they do unite, which it is ten thousand to one will happen before the form of the democracy is agreed upon, and while its plausible constitution is framing, that moment they form a faction, and the pretended efficacy of the democratic system, which is to operate by the power of opinion and persuasion, comes to an end. For an *imperium in imperio* exists; there is a state within the state, a combination interested and active

in hindering the will of the majority from being obeyed.

Every bad passion that dreads restraint from the laws, will seek impunity and indulgence in faction. The associates will not come together in cold blood. They will not yawn over the contemplation of their cause, and shrink from the claim of its necessary perils and sacrifices. They will do all that can possibly be done, and they will attempt more. They will begin early, persevere long, ask no respite for themselves, and are sure to triumph, if their enemies take any. Suppose at first their numbers to be exceedingly few, their efforts will for that reason be so much the greater. They will call themselves the people; they will, in their name, arraign every act of government as wicked and weak; they will oblige the rulers to stand for ever on the defensive, as culprits at the bar of an offended public. With a venal press at command, concealing their number and their infamy, is it to be doubted, that the ignorant will, soon or late, unite with the vicious? Their union is inevitable; and, when united, those allies are powerful enough to strike terror into the hearts of the firmest rulers. It is in vain, it is indeed childish to say, that an *enlightened* people will understand their own affairs, and thus the acts of a faction will be baffled. No people on earth are or can be so enlightened, as to the details of political affairs. To study politics, so as to know correctly the force of the reasons for a large part of the public measures, would stop the labour of the plough and the hammer; and how are these million of students to have access to the means of information?

When it is thus apparent, that the vicious will have as many opportunities as inducements to inflame and

deceive, it results from the nature of democracy, that the ignorant will join, and the ambitious will lead their combination. Who, then, will deny, that the vicious are armed with power, and the virtuous exposed to persecution and peril?

If a sense of their danger compel these latter, at length, to unite also in self-defence, it will be late, probably, too late, without means to animate and cement their union, and with no hope beyond that of protracting, for a short time, the certain catastrophe of their destruction, which, in fact, no democracy has ever yet failed to accomplish.

If, then, all this is to happen, not from accident, not, as shallow or base demagogues pretend, from the management of monarchists or aristocrats, but from the principles of democracy itself, as we have attempted to demonstrate, ought we not to consider democracy as the worst of all governments, or, if there be a worse, as the certain forerunner of that? What other form of civil rule among men so irresistibly tends to free vice from restraint, and to subject virtue to persecution?

The common supposition is, and it is ever assumed as the basis of argument, that in a democracy the laws have only to command *individuals*, who yield a willing and conscientious obedience; and who would be destitute of the force to resist, if they should lack the disposition to submit. But this supposition, which so constantly triumphs in the newspapers, utterly fails in the trial, as experience has shown, in our republic, which we do not denominate a democracy. It required an army to enforce the collection of a tax, and no sooner had its receipts begun to reimburse the charges of government, when popularity was found to

be a greater treasure than money, and the law was annulled.

But we shall be told, in defiance both of fact and good sense, that factions will not exist, or will be impotent, if they do; for the majority have a right to govern, and certainly will govern by their representatives. Let their right be admitted, but they certainly will *not* govern, in either of two cases, both fairly supposeable, and likely, nay, sure to happen in succession: that a section of country, a combination, party, or faction, call it what you will, shall prove daring and potent enough to obstruct the laws, and to exempt itself from their operation; or, growing bolder with impunity and success, finally by art, deceit, and perseverance, to force its chiefs into power, and thus, instead of submitting to the government, to bring the government into submission to a faction. Then, the forms and the names of a free government will be used, and used more ostentatiously than ever; but its principles will be abused, and its ramparts and defences laid flat to the ground.

There are many, who, believing that a pen-full of ink can impart a deathless energy to a constitution, and having seen, with pride and joy, two or three skins of parchment added, like new walls about a fortress, to our own, will be filled with astonishment, and say, Is not our legislature divided? our executive single? our judiciary independent? Have we not amendments and bills of rights, excelling all compositions in prose? Where, then, can our danger lie? Our government, so we read, is constructed in such a manner as to defend itself, and the people. We have the greatest political security, for we have adopted the soundest principles.

To most grown children, therefore, the existence of faction will seem chimerical. Yet did any free state ever exist without the most painful and protracted conflicts with this foe? or expire any otherwise than by his triumph? The spring is not more genial to the grain and fruits than to insects and vermin. The same sun that decks the fields with flowers, thaws out the serpent in the fen, and concocts his poison.

As soon as such a faction is known to subsist in force, we shall be told, the people may, and because they may, they surely *will* rally to discomfit and punish the conspirators. If the whole people in a body are to do this as often as it may be necessary, then it seems our political plan is to carry on our government by successive, or rather incessant *revolutions*. When the people deliberate and act in person, laying aside the plain truth, that it is impossible they should, all delegated authority is at an end: the representatives would be nothing in the presence of their assembled constituents. Thus falls or stops the machine of a regular government. Thus a faction, hostile to the government, would ensure their success by the very remedy that is supposed effectual to disappoint their designs.

Men of a just way of thinking, will be ready to renounce the opinions we have been considering, and to admit, that liberty is lost, where faction domineers; that some security must be provided against its attacks; and that no free government can be secure or orderly, unless it be invested by the constitution itself with the means of self-defence. It is enough for the people to approve the lawful use of them. And this for a *free* government must be the easiest thing in the world.

Now, the contrary of this last opinion is the truth. By a *free* government this difficulty is nearly or quite insuperable; for the audaciousness and profligacy of faction, is ever in proportion to the liberty of the political constitution. In a tyranny, individuals are nothing. Conscious of their nothingness, the spirit of liberty is torpid or extinct. But in a free state there is, necessarily, a great mass of power left in the hands of the citizens, with the spirit to use and the desire to augment it. Hence will proceed an infinity of clubs and associations, for purposes often laudable or harmless, but not unfrequently factious. It is obvious, that the combination of some hundreds or thousands for political ends will produce a great aggregate stock or mass of power. As by combining they greatly augment their power, for that very reason they will combine; and, as magistrates would seldom like to devolve their authority upon volunteers, who might offer to play the magistrate in their stead, there is almost nothing left for a band of combined citizens to do, but to discredit and obstruct the government and laws. The possession of power by the magistrate is not so sure to produce respect as to kindle envy; and to the envious it is a gratification to humble those who are exalted. But the ambitious find the public discontent a passport to office—then they must breed or inflame discontent. We have the example before our eyes.

Is it not evident, then, that a free government must exert a great deal *more* power to obtain obedience from an extensive combination or faction, than would be necessary to extort it from a much larger number of uncombined individuals? If the regular government has that degree of power, which, let it be noted,

the jealousy of a free people often inclines them to withhold; and if it should exercise its power with promptness and spirit, a supposition not a little improbable, for such governments frequently have more strength than firmness, then the faction may be, for that time, repressed and kept from doing mischief. It will, however, instantly change its pretexts and its means, and renew the contest with more art and caution, and with the advantage of all the discontents, which every considerable popular agitation is sure to multiply and to imbitter. This immortal enemy, whom it is possible to bind, though only for a time, and in flaxen chains, but not to kill; who may be baffled, but cannot be disarmed; who is never weakened by defeat, nor discouraged by disappointment, again tries and wears out the strength of the government and the temper of the people. It is a game which the factious will never be weary of playing, because they play for an empire, yet on their own part hazard nothing. If they fail, they lose only their ticket, and say, draw your lottery again; if they win, as in the end they must and will, if the constitution has not provided *within*, or unless the people will bring, which they will not long, from *without*, some energy to hinder their success, it will be complete; for conquering parties never content themselves with half the fruits of victory. Their power once obtained, can be and will be confirmed by nothing but the terror or weakness of the real people. Justice will shrink from the bench, and tremble at her own bar.

As property is the object of the great mass of every faction, the rules that keep it sacred will be annulled, or so far shaken, as to bring enough of it within the grasp of the dominant party to reward their partisans

with booty. But the chieftains, thirsting only for dominion, will search for the means of extending or establishing it. They will, of course, innovate, till the vestiges of private right, and of restraints on public authority, are effaced; until the real people are stripped of all privilege and influence, and become even more abject and spiritless than weak. The many may be deluded, but the success of a faction is ever the victory of a few; and the power of the few can be supported by nothing but force. This catastrophe is fatal.

The people, it will be thought, will see their error, and return. *But there is no return to liberty.* What the fire of faction does not destroy, it will debase. Those, who have once tasted of the cup of sovereignty, will be unfitted to be subjects; and those, who have not, will scarcely form a wish beyond the unmolested ignominy of slaves.

But will those who scorn to live at all, unless they can live free, will these noble spirits abandon the public cause? Will they not break their chains on the heads of their oppressors? Suppose they attempt it, then we have a civil war; and when political diseases require the sword, the remedy will kill. Tyrants may be dethroned, and usurpers expelled and punished; but the sword, once drawn, cannot be sheathed. Whoever holds it, must rule by it; and that rule, though victory should give it to the best men and the honestest cause, cannot be liberty. Though painted as a goddess, she is mortal, and her spirit, once severed by the sword, can be evoked no more from the shades.

Is this catastrophe too distant to be viewed, or too improbable to be dreaded? I should not think it so

formidably near as I do, if in the short interval of impending fate, in which alone it can be of any use to be active, the heart of every honest man in the nation was penetrated with the anxiety that oppresses my own. Then the subversion of the public liberty would at least be delayed, if it could not be prevented. Her maladies might be palliated, if not cured. She might long drag on the life of an invalid, instead of soon suffering the death of a martyr.

The soft, timid sons of luxury love liberty as well as it is possible they should, to love pleasure better. They desire to sleep in security, and to enjoy protection, without being molested to give it. While all, who are not devoted to pleasure, are eager in the pursuit of wealth, how will it be possible to rouse such a spirit of liberty, as can alone secure, or prolong its possession? For if, in the extraordinary perils of the country, the citizens will not kindle with a more than ordinary, with an heroic flame, its cause will be abandoned without effort, and lost beyond redemption. But, if the faithful votaries of liberty, uncertain what counsels to follow, should, for the present, withhold their exertions, will they not at least bestow their attention? Will they not fix it, with an unusual intensity of thought, upon the scene; and will they not fortify their nerves to contemplate a prospect that is shaded with horror, and already flashes with tempest?

[The author here proceeds to illustrate the positions which he has laid down, by a reference to the history of the federal government, from its earliest administration by Washington.]

It is undeniably true, that faction was organized sooner than the new government. Faction resolved,

that the new government should not exist at all, or, if that could not be prevented, that it should exist without energy. Accordingly, the presses of that time teemed with calumny and invective. Before the new government had done any thing, there was nothing oppressive or tyrannical which it was not accused of meditating; and when it began its operations, there was nothing wise or fit, that it was not charged with neglecting; nothing right or beneficial that it did, but from an insidious design to delude and betray the people.

He is certainly a political novice or a hypocrite, who will pretend, that the opposition to the government is to be ascribed to the concern of the people for their liberties, rather than to the profligate ambition of their demagogues, eager for power, and suddenly alarmed by the imminent danger of losing it; demagogues, who, leading lives like Clodius, and with the maxims of Cato in their mouths, cherishing principles like Catiline, have acted steadily on a plan of usurpation like Cæsar.

Public reason and virtue cannot be again, as during the presidency of Washington, the governing power, till our government has passed through its revolutionary changes. Every faction that may happen to rule, will pursue but two objects, its vengeance on the fallen party, and the security of its own power against any new one that may rise to contest it. As to the glory that wise rulers partake, when they obtain it for their nation, no person of understanding will suppose, that the gaudy, ephemeral insects, that bask and flutter no longer than while the sun of popularity shines without a cloud, will either possess the means or feel the passion for it. What

have the Condorcets and Rolands of to-day to hope or to enjoy from the personal reputation or public happiness of to-morrow? Their objects are all selfish, all temporary.

Every party that has fallen in France, has been overwhelmed with infamy, but without proofs or discrimination. If time and truth have furnished any materials for the vindication of the ex-rulers, there has, nevertheless, been no instance of the return of the public to pity, or of the injured to power. The revolution has no retrograde steps. Its course is onward from the patriots and statesmen to the hypocrites and cowards, and onward still through successive committees of ruffians, till some one ruffian happens to be a hero. Then chance no longer has a power over events, for this last inevitably becomes an emperor.

The restoration of the public reason and virtue to influence in the government, supposes two things, the slumber or extinction of faction, and the efficacy of public morals. It supposes an interval of calm, when reason will dare to speak, and prejudice itself will incline to hear. Then, it is still hoped by many, *Nova progenies cælo demittitur alto*, the genuine public voice would call wisdom into power; and the love of country, which is the morality of politics, would guard and maintain its authority.

Are not these the visions that delight a poet's fancy, but will never revisit the statesman's eyes? When will faction sleep? Not till its labours of vengeance and ambition are over. Faction, we know, is the twin brother of our liberty, and born first; and, as we are told in the fable of Castor and Pollux, the only one of the two that is immortal. As long as there is a faction in full force, and possessed of the government too, the

public will and the public reason must have power to compel, as well as to convince, or they will convince without reforming. Bad men, who rise by intrigue, may be dispossessed by worse men, who rise over their heads by deeper intrigue; but what has the public reason to do, but to deplore its silence or to polish its chains? This last we find is now the case in France. And do we not see our giddy multitude celebrate with joy the triumphs of a party over some essential articles of our constitution, and recently over one integral and independent branch of our government? When our Roland falls, our Danton will be greeted with as loud a peal and as splendid a triumph.

When we talk of patriotism as the theme of declamation, it is not very material that we should know with any precision what we mean. It is a subject on which hypocrisy will seem to ignorance to be eloquent, because all of it will be received and well received as flattery. Patriotism, to be a powerful or steady principle of action, must be deeply imbued by education, and strongly impressed both by the policy of the government and the course of events. To love our country with ardour, we must often have some fears for its safety; our affection will be exalted in its distress; and our self-esteem will glow on the contemplation of its glory. It is only by such diversified and incessant exercise, that the sentiment can become strong in the individual, or be diffused over the nation.

Shall we be told, that, if the nation is not animated with public spirit, the individuals are at least fitted to be good citizens by the purity of their *morals?* But what are morals without restraints? and how will merely voluntary restraints be maintained?

Besides, in political reasoning it is generally over-

looked, that, if the existence of morals should encourage a people to prefer a democratic system, the operation of that system is sure to destroy their morals. Power, in such a society, cannot long have any regular control; and, without control, it is itself a vice. Is there in human affairs an occasion of profligacy more shameless or more contagious than a general election? Every spring gives birth and gives wings to this epidemic mischief. Then begins a sort of tillage, that turns up to the sun and air the most noxious weeds in the kindliest soil; or to speak still more seriously, it is a moral pestilence, that begins with rottenness in the marrow. A democratic society will soon find its morals the incumbrance of its race, the surly companion of its licentious joys. It will encourage its demagogues to impeach and persecute the magistracy, till it is no longer disquieted. In a word, there will not be morals without justice; and though justice might possibly support a democracy, yet a democracy cannot possibly support justice.

Rome was never weary of making laws for that end, and failed. France has had nearly as many laws as soldiers, yet never had justice or liberty for one day. Nevertheless, there can be no doubt, that the ruling faction has often desired to perpetuate its authority by establishing justice. The difficulties, however, lie in the nature of the thing; for in democratic states there are ever more volunteers to destroy than to build; and nothing that is restraint can be erected without being odious, nor maintained, if it is. Justice herself must be built on a loose foundation, and every villain's hand is, of course busy to pluck out the underpinning. Instead of being the awful power that is to control the popular passions, she descends from the

height of her temple and becomes the cruel and vindictive instrument of them.

The popular leaders commit no such mistake as that of founding their hopes on the supposed existence of sufficient political virtue, and on the permanency and authority of the public morals. They act on the knowledge of what men actually are, not what they ought to be. Instead of enlightening the popular understanding, their business is to bewilder it. They know that the vicious, on whom society makes war, would join them in their attack upon government. They inflame the ignorant; they flatter the vain; they offer novelty to the restless; and promise plunder to the base. The envious are assured, that the great shall fall; and the ambitious, that *they* shall become great.

There is no society without jacobins; no free society without a formidable host of them; and no democracy, whose powers they will not usurp, nor whose liberties, if it be not absurd to suppose a democracy can have any, they will not destroy. A nation must be exceedingly well educated, in which the ignorant and the credulous are few. Athens, with all its wonderful taste and literature, poured them into her popular assemblies by thousands. It is by no means certain, that a nation, composed wholly of scholars and philosophers, would contain less presumption, political ignorance, levity, and extravagance, than another state, peopled by tradesmen, farmers and men of business, without a metaphysician or speculatist among them. The opulent in Holland were the friends of those French who subdued their country, and enslaved them. It was the well-dressed, the learned, or, at least, the conceited mob of France that did infinitely

more than the mere rabble of Paris, to overturn the throne of the Bourbons. The multitude were made giddy with projects of innovation, before they were armed with pikes to enforce them.

As there is nothing really excellent in our government which faction has not represented as old in abuse, the natural vanity, presumption, and restlessness of the human heart have, from the first, afforded the strength of a host to the jacobins of our country. The ambitious desperadoes are the natural leaders of this host.

Now, though such leaders may have many occasions of jealousy and discord with one another, especially in the division of power and booty, is it not absurd to suppose, that any set of them will endeavour to restore both to the right owners? Do we expect a self-denying ordinance from the sons of violence and rapine? Are not those remarkably inconsistent with themselves, who say, our system is a government of justice and order, that subsists by morals, and whose office it is to ask counsel of the wise, and to give protection to the good, yet who console themselves in the storms of the state with the fond hope, that order will spring out of confusion, because innovators will grow weary of change, and the ambitious will contend about their spoil. Then we are to have justice and order from the fortuitous concourse of atoms, from the crash and jumble of all that is precious or sacred in the state. It is said, the popular hopes and fears are the gales that impel the political vessel. Can any disappointment of such hopes be greater than their folly?

In every event of the division of the ruling party, the friends of true liberty have nothing to hope. Tyrants may thus be often changed, but the tyranny will remain.

A democracy cannot last. Its nature ordains that its next change shall be into a military despotism,—of all known governments, perhaps the most prone to shift its head, and the slowest to mend its vices. The reason is, that the tyranny of what is called the people, and that of the sword, both operate alike to debase and corrupt, till there are neither men left with the spirit to desire liberty, nor morals with the power to sustain justice. Like the burning pestilence that destroys the human body, nothing can subsist by its dissolution but vermin.

A military government may make a nation great, but it cannot make them free. There will be frequent and bloody struggles to decide who shall hold the sword; but the conqueror will destroy his competitors, and prevent any permanent division of the empire. Experience proves, that in all such governments there is a continual tendency to *unity*.

Some kind of balance between the two branches of the Roman government had been maintained for several ages, till at length every popular demagogue, from the two Gracchi to Cesar, tried to gain favour, and by favour to gain power by flattering the multitude with new pretensions to power in the state. The assemblies of the people disposed of everything; and intrigue and corruption, and often force, disposed of the votes of those assemblies. It appears, that Catulus, Cato, Cicero, and the wisest of the Roman patriots, and perhaps wiser never lived, kept on, hoping to the last, that the people would see their error, and return to the safe old path. They laboured incessantly to re-establish the commonwealth; but the deep corruption of those times, not more corrupt

than our own, rendered that impossible. Many of the friends of liberty were slain in the civil wars; some, like Lucullus, had retired to their farms; and most of the others, if not banished by the people, were without commands in the army, and, of course, without power in the state. Catiline came near being chosen consul, and Piso and Gabinius, scarcely less corrupt, *were* chosen. A people so degenerate could not maintain liberty; and do *we* find bad morals or dangerous designs any obstruction to the election of any favourite of the popular party? It is remarkable, that when by a most singular concurrence of circumstances, after the death of Cesar, an opportunity was given to the Romans to re-establish the republic, there was no effective disposition among the people to concur in that design. It seemed as if the republican party had expired with the dictator. The truth is, when parties rise and resort to violence, the moment of calm, if one should happen to succeed, leaves little to wisdom and nothing to choice. The orations of Cicero proved feeble against the arms of Mark Antony.

A democracy, a party, and an army bear a close resemblance to each other; they are all creatures of emotion and impulse. However discordant all the parts of a democracy may be, they all seek a centre, and that centre is the single arbitrary power of a chief. In this we see how exactly a democracy is like an army: they are equally governments by downright force.

A multitude can be moved only by their passions; and these, when their gratification is obstructed, instantly impel them to arms. *Furor arma ministrat.* The club is first used, and then, as more effectual,

the sword. The *disciplined* is found by the leaders to be more manageable than the *mobbish* force. The rabble at Paris, that conquered the Bastille, were soon formed into national guards. But from the first to the last, the nature, and character, and instruments of power remain the same. A *ripe* democracy will not long want sharp tools and able leaders: in fact, though not in name, it is an army.

It is true, an army is not constituted as a deliberative body, and very seldom pretends to deliberate; but whenever it does, it is a democracy in regiments and brigades, somewhat the more orderly as well as more merciful for its discipline. It always will deliberate, when it is suffered to feel its own power, and is indiscreetly provoked to exert it. At those times, is there much reason to believe it will act with less good sense, or with a more determined contempt for the national interest and opinion, than a giddy multitude managed by worthless leaders? Now though an army is not indulged with a vote, it cannot be stripped of its feelings, feelings that may be managed, but cannot be resisted. If Pompey, before the battle of Pharsalia, had joined his lieutenants in Spain, with the design of abandoning Italy, and erecting Spain into a separate republic, or monarchy, every Roman citizen would have despised, and every Roman soldier would have abandoned him. After that fatal battle, Cato and Scipio never once thought of keeping Africa as an independent government; nor did Brutus and Cassius suppose, that Greece and Macedonia, which they held with an army, afforded them more than the means of contesting with Octavius and Antony the dominion of Rome.

No hatred is fiercer than such as springs up among those who are closely allied, and nearly resemble each other. Every common soldier would be easily made to feel the personal insult and the intolerable wrong of another army's rejecting his emperor and setting up one of their own;—not only so, but he knew it was both a threat and a defiance. National disputes are not understood, and their consequences not foreseen, by the multitude; but a quarrel that concerns the life, and fame, and authority of a military favourite, takes hold of the heart, and stirs up all the passions.

A democracy is so like an army, that no one will be at a loss in applying these observations. The great spring of action with the people in a democracy, is their fondness for one set of men, the men who flatter and deceive, and their outrageous aversion to another, most probably those who prefer their true interest to their favour.

A mob is no sooner gathered together, than it instinctively feels the want of a leader, a want that is soon supplied. They may not obey him as long, but they obey him as implicitly, and will as readily fight and burn, or rob and murder, in his cause, as the soldiers will for their general.

[The author here proceeds to show, from the event of the Roman republic, that his country, after being the prey of successive struggles, arising from the licentiousness of rival factions, will remain subject to one indivisible bad government. After faction, in the time of Marius, utterly obliterated every republican principle that was worth any thing, Rome remained a military despotism for almost six hundred years; and as the re-establishment of liberty in the United States,

after it is once lost, is a thing not to be expected, what can succeed its loss but a government by the sword? It would certainly be easier to prevent than to retrieve the fall.]

Great Britain, by being an island, is secured from foreign conquest; and by having a powerful enemy within sight of her shore is kept in sufficient dread of it to be inspired with patriotism. That virtue, with all the fervour and elevation that a society which mixes so much of the commercial with the martial spirit can display, has other kindred virtues in its train; and these have had an influence in forming the habits and principles of action, not only of the English military and nobles, but of the mass of the nation. There is much, therefore, there is every thing in that island to blend self-love with love of country. It is impossible, that a true Englishman should have fears for the government without trembling for his own safety. How different are these sentiments from the immovable apathy of those citizens, who think a constitution no better than any other piece of paper, nor so good as a blank on which a more perfect one could be written!

By removing or changing the relation of any one of the pillars that support the British government, its identity and excellence would be lost, a revolution would ensue. When the House of Commons voted the House of Peers useless, a tyranny of the committees of that body sprang up. The English nation have had the good sense, or, more correctly, the good fortune, to alter nothing, till time and circumstances enforced the alteration, and then to abstain from speculative innovations. The evil spirit of metaphysics has not

been conjured up to demolish, in order to lay out a new foundation by the line, and to build upon plan. The present happiness of that nation rests upon old foundations, so much the more solid, because the meddlesome ignorance of professed builders has not been allowed to new lay them. We may be permitted to call it a *matter of fact* government.

More essential breaches have been made in our constitution within four years than in the British in the last hundred and forty*. In that *enslaved* country, every executive attempt at usurpation has been spiritedly and perseveringly resisted, and substantial improvements have been made in the constitutional provisions for liberty. Witness the Habeas Corpus, the independence of the judges, and the perfection, if any thing human is perfect, of their administration of justice, the result of the famous Middlesex election, and that on the right of issuing general search-warrants. Let every citizen who is able to think, and who can bear the pain of thinking, make the contrast at his leisure.

They are certainly blind who do not see, that we are descending from a supposed orderly and stable republican government into a licentious democracy, with a progress that baffles all means to resist, and scarcely leaves leisure to deplore its celerity.

But, if our experience had not clearly given warning of our approaching catastrophe, the very nature of democracy would inevitably produce it.

A government by the passions of the multitude, or, no less correctly, according to the vices and ambition

* Would Fisher Ames have written this had he lived to see the innovations of the last four years?—Ed.

of their leaders, is a democracy. We have heard so long of the indefeasible sovereignty of the people, and have admitted so many specious theories of the rights of man, which are contradicted by his nature and experience, that few will dread at all, and fewer still will dread as they ought, the evils of a democracy. They will not believe them near, or they will think them tolerable or temporary. Fatal delusion!

When it is said, there may be a tyranny of the *many* as well as of the *few*, every democrat will yield at least a cold and speculative assent; but he will at all times act, as if it were a thing incomprehensible, that there should be any evil to be apprehended in the uncontrolled power of the people. He will say, arbitrary power may make a tyrant, but how can it make its possessor a slave?

In the first place, let it be remarked, the power of individuals is a very different thing from their liberty. When I vote for the man I prefer, he may happen not to be chosen; or he may disappoint my expectations, if he is; or he may be out-voted by others in the public body to which he is elected. I may, then, hold and exercise all the power that a citizen can have or enjoy, and yet such laws may be made, and such abuses allowed, as shall deprive me of all liberty. I may be tried by a jury, and that jury may be culled and picked out from my political enemies by the officer of the court. Of course, my life and liberty may depend on the good pleasure of the man who appoints that officer. I may be assessed arbitrarily for my profession, or upon conjectural estimation of my property, so that all I have shall be at the control of the government, whenever its displeasure shall exact the

sacrifice. I may be told, that I am bound to submit, in all cases whatsoever, to the will of the majority, as the ruling faction ever pretend to be. My submission may be tested by my resisting or obeying commands that will involve me in disgrace, or drive me to despair. I may become a fugitive, because the ruling party have made me afraid to stay at home; or, perhaps, while I remain at home, they may, nevertheless, think fit to inscribe my name on the list of emigrants and proscribed persons.

All this was done in France, and many of the admirers of French examples are impatient to imitate them. All this time the people may be told, they are the freest in the world; but what ought my opinion to be? What would the threatened clergy, the *aristocracy* of wealthy merchants, whose case might be no better than mine, what would they think of their condition? Would they call it liberty? Surely, here is oppression sufficient in extent and degree to make the government that inflicts it both odious and terrible; yet this and a thousand times more than this was practised in Frace, and will be repeated, as often as it shall please God in his wrath to deliver a people to the dominion of their licentious passions.

The people, as a body, cannot deliberate. Nevertheless, they will feel an irresistible impulse to act, and their resolutions will be dictated to them by their demagogues. The consciousness, or the opinion, that they possess the supreme power, will inspire inordinate passions; and the violent men, who are the most forward to gratify those passions, will be their favourites. What is called the government of the people is, in

fact, too often the arbitrary power of such men. Here, then, we have the faithful portrait of democracy. What avails the boasted *power* of individual citizens? or of what value is the will of the majority, if that will is dictated by a committee of demagogues, and law and right are in fact at the mercy of a victorious faction? To make a nation free, the crafty must be kept in awe, and the violent in restraint. The weak and the simple find their liberty arise not from their own individual sovereignty, but from the power of law and justice over all. It is only by the due restraint of others, that I am free.

Popular sovereignty is scarcely less beneficent than awful, when it resides in their courts of justice; there its office, like a sort of human providence, is to warn, enlighten, and protect; when the people are inflamed to seize and exercise it in their assemblies, it is competent only to kill and destroy. Temperate liberty is like the dew, as it falls unseen from its own heaven; constant without excess, it finds vegetation thirsting for its refreshment, and imparts to it the vigour to take more. All nature, moistened with blessings, sparkles in the morning ray. But democracy is a water-spout, that bursts from the clouds, and lays the ravaged earth bare to its rocky foundations. The labours of man lie whelmed with his hopes beneath masses of ruin, that bury not only the dead, but their monuments.

It is the almost universal mistake of our countrymen, that democracy would be mild and safe in America. They charge the horrid excesses of France not so much to human nature, which will never act

better, when the restraints of government, morals, and religion are thrown off, but to the characteristic cruelty and wickedness of Frenchmen.

The truth is, and let it humble our pride, the most ferocious of all animals, when his passions are roused to fury and are uncontrolled, is man; and of all governments, the worst is that which never fails to excite, but was never found to restrain those passions, that is, democracy. It is an illuminated hell, that in the midst of remorse, horror, and torture, rings with festivity; for experience shows, that one joy remains to this most malignant description of the damned, the power to make others wretched. When a man looks round and sees his neighbours mild and merciful, he cannot feel afraid of the abuse of their power over him: and surely if they oppress me, he will say, they will spare their own liberty, for that is dear to all mankind. It is so. The human heart is so constituted, that a man loves liberty as naturally as himself. Yet liberty is a rare thing in the world, though the love of it is so universal.

Before the French Revolution, it was the prevailing opinion of our countrymen, that other nations were not free, because their despotic governments were too strong for the people. Of course, we were admonished to detest all existing governments, as so many lions in liberty's path; and to expect by their downfal the happy opportunity that every emancipated people would embrace to secure their own equal rights for ever. France is supposed to have had this opportunity, and to have lost it. Ought we not, then, to be convinced, that something more is necessary to preserve liberty than to love it? Ought we not to see

that, when the people have destroyed all power but their own, they are the nearest possible to a despotism, the more uncontrolled for being new, and tenfold the more cruel for its hypocrisy?

The steps by which a people must proceed to change a government, are not those to enlighten their judgment or to soothe their passions. They cannot stir without following the men before them, who breathe fury into their hearts, and banish nature from them. On whatever grounds, and under whatever leaders the contest may be commenced, the revolutionary work is the same, and the characters of the agents will be assimilated to it. A revolution is a mine that must explode with destructive violence. The men who were once peaceable, like to carry firebrands and daggers too long. Thus armed, will they submit to salutary restraint? How will you bring them to it? Will you undertake to reason down fury? Will you satisfy revenge without blood? Will you preach banditti into habits of self-denial? If you can, and in times of violence and anarchy, why do you ask any other guard than sober reason for your life and property in times of peace and order, when men are most disposed to listen to it? Yet even at such times, you impose restraints; you call out for your defence the whole array of law with its instruments of punishment and terror; you maintain ministers to strengthen force with opinion, and to make religion the auxiliary of morals. With all this, however, crimes are still perpetrated; society is not any too safe or quiet. Break down all these fences; make what is called law an assassin; take what it ought to protect, and divide it; extinguish by acts of

rapine and vengeance the spark of mercy in the heart; or, if it should be found to glow there, quench it in that heart's blood; make your people scoff at their morals, and unlearn an education to virtue; displace the Christian Sabbath by a profane one, for a respite once in ten days from the toils of murder, because men, who first shed blood for revenge, and proceed to spill it for plunder, and in the progress of their ferocity, for sport, want a festival,—what sort of society would you have? Would not rage grow with its indulgence? The coward fury of a mob rises in proportion as there is less resistance: and their inextinguishable thirst for slaughter grows more ardent as more blood is shed to slake it. In such a state is liberty to be gained or guarded from violation? It could not be kept an hour from the daggers of those, who, having seized despotic power, would claim it as their lawful prize.—I have written the history of France. Can we look back upon it without terror, or forward without despair?

The nature of arbitrary power is always odious; but it cannot be long the arbitrary power of the multitude. There is, probably, no form of rule among mankind, in which the progress of the government depends so little on the particular character of those who administer it. Democracy is the creature of impulse and violence; and the intermediate stages towards the tyranny of one are so quickly passed, that the vileness and cruelty of men are displayed with surprising uniformity. There is not time for great talents to act. There is no sufficient reason to believe, that we should conduct a revolution with much more mildness than the French. If a revo-

lution find the citizens lambs, it will soon make them carnivorous, if not cannibals. There is no governing power in the state but party. The moderate and thinking part of the citizens are without power or influence; and it must be so, because all power and influence are engrossed by a factious combination of men, who can overwhelm uncombined individuals with numbers, and the wise and virtuous with clamour and fury.

It is indeed a law of politics as well as of physics, that a body in action must overcome an equal body at rest. The attacks that have been made on the constitutional barriers proclaim, in a tone that would not be louder from a trumpet, that party will not tolerate any resistance to its will. All the supposed independent orders of the commonwealth must be its servile instruments, or its victims. We should experience the same despotism here, but the battle is not yet won. It will be won; and they who already display the temper of their Jacobin progenitors, will not linger or reluct in imitating the worst extremes of their example.

What, then, is to be our condition, if democracy should become dominant?

Faction will inevitably triumph. Where the government is both stable and free, there may be parties. There will be differences of opinion, and the pride of opinion will be sufficient to generate contests, and to inflame them with bitterness and rancour. There will be rivalships among those whom genius, fame, or station have made great, and these will deeply agitate the state without often hazarding its safety. Such parties will excite alarm, but they may be safely left,

like the elements, to exhaust their fury upon each other.

The object of their strife is to get power *under* the government; for, where that is constituted as it should be, the power *over* the government will not seem attainable, and, of course, will not be attempted.

But in democratic states there will be *factions*. The sovereign power being nominally in the hands of all, will be effective within the grasp of a FEW; and, therefore, by the very laws of our nature, a few will combine, intrigue, lie, and fight, to engross it to themselves. All history bears testimony, that this attempt has never yet been disappointed.

Who will be the associates? Certainly not the virtuous, who do not wish to control the society, but quietly to enjoy its protection. The enterprising merchant, the thriving tradesman, the careful farmer, will be engrossed by the toils of their business, and will have little time or inclination for the unprofitable and disquieting pursuits of politics. It is not the industrious, sober husbandman, who will plough that barren field; it is the lazy and dissolute bankrupt, who has no other to plough. The idle, the ambitious, and the needy, will band together to break the hold that law has upon them, and then to get hold of law. Faction is a Hercules, whose first labour is to strangle this lion, and then to make armour of his skin. In every democratic state, the popular faction will have law to keep down its enemies; but it will arrogate to itself an undisputed power over law. Is it not absurd to suppose, that the conquerors will be contented with half the fruits of victory?

We are to be subject, then, if we once reach demo-

cracy, to a *despotic* faction, irritated by the resistance that has delayed, and the scorn that pursues their triumph, elate with the insolence of an arbitrary and uncontrollable domination, and who will exercise their sway, not according to the rules of integrity or national policy, but in conformity with their own exclusive interests and passions.

This is a state of things, which admits of progress, but not of reformation: it is the beginning of a revolution, which must *advance*. Our affairs, as first observed, no longer depend on counsel. The opinion of a majority is no longer invited or permitted to control our destinies, or even to retard their consummation. The demagogues of the day may, and, no doubt, will give place to some other faction, who will succeed, because they are abler men, or, possibly, in candour we say it, because they are worse. Intrigue will for some time answer instead of force, or the mob will supply it.

While the passions of the multitude can be conciliated to confer power and to overcome all impediments to its action, our rulers have a plain and easy task to perform. It costs them nothing but hypocrisy. As soon, however, as rival favourites of the people may happen to contend by the practice of the same arts, we are to look for the sanguinary strife of ambition. Brissot will fall by the hand of Danton, and *he* will be supplanted by Robespierre. The revolution will proceed in exactly the same way, but not with so rapid a pace, as that of France. The vis major will prevail, and some bold chieftain will conquer liberty and reign in her stead.

Chapter II.

EQUALITY*.

There are some popular maxims, which are scarcely credited as true, and yet are cherished as precious, and defended as even sacred. Most of the *democratic* articles of faith are blended with truth, and *seem* to be true; and they so comfortably soothe the pride and envy of the heart, that it swells with resentment when they are contested, and suffers some spasms of apprehension, even when they are examined.

Mr. Thomas Paine's writings abound with this sort of specious falsehoods and perverted truths. Of all his doctrines, none, perhaps, has created more agitation and alarm, than that which proclaims to all men that they are free and equal. This creed is older than its supposed author, and was threadbare in America, before Mr. Paine ever saw our shores; yet it had the effect, in other parts of the world, of novelty. It was *news*, that the French Revolution scattered through the world. It made the spirit of restlessness and innovation universal. Those who could not be ruled by reason, resolved that they would not be restrained by power. Those who had been governed by law, hungered and thirsted to enjoy, or rather to exercise, the new prerogatives of a democratic majority, which, of right, could establish, and, for any cause or no cause at all, could change. They believed that by making their own and other men's passions *sovereign*, they

* Written in 1801.

should invest man with immediate perfectibility, and breathe into their regenerated liberty an ethereal spirit that would never die. Slaves grew weary of their chains, and freemen sick of their rights. The true liberty had no charms, but such as the philosophists affirmed had been already rifled. The lazaroni of Naples, fifty thousand houseless, naked wretches, heard of their rights, and considered their wants as so many wrongs. The soldiers of Prussia were ready for town-meetings. Even in Constantinople, it seemed as if the new doctrine would overpower the sedative action of opium, and stimulate the drowsy Turks to a Parisian frenzy. It is not strange, that slaves should sigh for liberty, as for some unknown good. But England and the United States of America, while in the full fruition of it, were almost tempted to renounce its possession for its promise. Societies were formed in both countries, which considered and represented their patriotism as the remnant of their prejudices; and the old defences of their liberty as the fortresses of an enemy, the means and the badges of their slavish subjection.

All men being free and equal, rulers become our servants, from whom we claim obligation, though we do not admit their right to exact any. This generation, being *equal* to the last, owes no obedience to its institutions; and, being *wiser*, owes them not even deference. It would be treachery to man, so long obstructed and delayed in his progress towards perfectibility, to forbear to exercise his *rights*. What if the existing governments should resist this new claim of the people?—yet the people, to be free, have only to will it. What if this age should bleed?—the next, or

the twentieth after this, will be disincumbered from the rubbish of the gothic building that we have subverted; and may lay the foundations of liberty as deep, and raise the pillars of its temple as high, as those who think correctly of its perpetuity and grandeur can desire.

With opinions so wild, and passions so fierce, the spirit of democracy has been sublimated to extravagance. There was nothing in the danger that affected other men's persons or rights that could intimidate, nothing in their sufferings that could melt them. They longed to see kings, and priests, and nobles, expiring in tortures. The massacres of Paris, the siege of Lyons, the drownings of Nantz, the murders in the name of justice, that made hosts of assassins weary of their work, were so many evils necessary to bring about good, or only so many acts of just retaliation of the oppressed upon their oppressors. The "*enlightened*" philosophists surveyed the agitations of the world, as if they did not live in it; as if they occupied, as mere spectators, a safe position in some star, and beheld revolutions sometimes brightening the disk of this planet with their fires, and at others dimming it with their vapours. They could contemplate, unmoved, the whirlwind, lifting the hills from their base, and mixing their ruins with the clouds. They could see the foundations of society gaping in fissures, as when an earthquake struggles from the centre. A *true* philosopher is superior to humanity: he could walk at ease over this earth, if it were unpeopled; he could tread, with all the pleasure of curiosity, on its cinders, the day after the final conflagration.

Equality, they insist, will indemnify mankind for all these apprehensions and sufferings. As some ages of war and anarchy may pass away, before the evils incident to the struggles of a revolution are exhausted, this generation might be allowed to have some cause to object to innovations, that are *certainly* to make them wretched, although, *possibly*, the grandchildren of their grandchildren may be the better for their sufferings. This slender hope, however, is all that the illuminists have proposed as the indemnity for all the crimes and misery of France, and all the horrors of the new revolutions that they wish to engender in Europe, from the Bosphorus to the Baltic. What is meant by this boastful equality? and what is its value?

The philosophers among the democrats will no doubt insist, that they do not mean to equalize property, they contend only for an equality of rights. If they restrict the word *equality* as carefully as they ought, it will not import, that all men have an equal right to all things, but, that to whatever they have a right, it is as much to be protected and provided for, as the right of any persons in society. In this sense, nobody will contest their claim. Yet, though the right of a poor man is as much his right, as a rich man's, there is no great novelty or wisdom in the discovery of the principle, nor are the French entitled to any pre-eminence on this account. The *Magna Charta* of England, obtained, I think, in the year 1216, contains the great body of what is called, and our revolutionists of 1776 called it, *English Liberty*. This they claimed as their birth-right, and with good reason; for it enacts, that justice shall not be sold,

nor denied, nor delayed; and as, soon afterwards, the trial by jury grew into general use, the subjects themselves are employed by the government to apply remedies, when *rights* are violated. For true equality and the rights of man, there never was a better or a wiser provision, as, in fact, it executes itself. This is the precious system of true equality, imported by our excellent and ever-to-be-venerated forefathers, which they prized as their birthright. Yet this glorious distinction of liberty, so ample, so stable, and so temperate, secured by the common law, has been reviled and exhibited to popular abhorrence, as the shameful badge of our yet colonial dependence on England.

As the common law secures equally all the rights of the citizens, and as the jacobin leaders loudly decry this system, it is obvious, that they extend their views still further. Undoubtedly, they include in their plan of equality, that the citizens shall have assigned to them new rights, and different from what they now enjoy. You have earned your estate, or it descended to you from your father; of course, my right to your estate is not as good as yours. Am I then to have, in the new order of things, an equal right with you? Certainly not, every democrat of any understanding will reply. What then do you propose by your equality? You have earned an estate; I have not; yet I have a right, and as good a right as another man to earn it. I may save my earnings, and deny myself the pleasures and comforts of life, till I have laid up a competent sum to provide for my infirmity and old age. All cannot be rich, but all have a right to make the attempt; and when some have fully succeeded, and others partially, and others not at all, the several

states, in which they then find themselves, become their condition in life; and whatever the rights of that condition may be, they are to be faithfully secured by the laws and government. This, however, is not the idea of the men of *the new order of things*, for, thus far, the plan belongs to a very old order of things.

They consider a republican government as the only one, in which this sort of equality can exist at all. A tyrant, or a king, which all democrats suppose to be words of like import, might leave the rights of his subjects unviolated. The grand seignior is arbitrary; the heavy hand of his despotism, however, falls only on the great men in office, the aristocrats, whom it must be a pleasure to the admirers of equality to see strangled by the bow-string; the great body of the subjects of the Turkish government lead a very undisturbed life, enjoying a stupid security from the oppressions of power. To enjoy rights, without having proper security for their enjoyment, ought not, indeed, to satisfy any political reasoners, and this is precisely the difficulty of the democratic sect. All the rights and equality they admire, are destitute of any rational security, and are of a nature utterly subversive of all true liberty. For, on close examination, it turns out, that their notion of equality is, that all the citizens of a republic, have *an equal right to political power*. This is called republicanism. This hastens the journey of a demagogue to power, and invests him with the title of *the man of the people*. This, the people are told, is their great cause, in opposition to the coalesced tyrants of Europe, and the intriguing federal aristocrats in America.

Restraints on the power of the people, seem to all democrats foolish, for how shall they restrain themselves? and mischievous, because, as they think, the power of the people is their liberty. Restraints, that make it less, and, on every inviting occasion for mischief, and the oppression of a minority, make it nothing, will appear to be the abandonment of its principles and cause.

All democrats maintain, that the people have an inherent, unalienable right to *power:* there is nothing so fixed, that they may not change it; nothing so sacred, that their voice, which is the voice of God, would not unsanctify and consign to destruction: it is not only true, that no king, or parliament, or generation past, can bind the people; but they cannot even bind themselves: the will of the majority is not only law, but right: having an unlimited right to act as they please, whatever they please to act is a rule. Thus, virtue itself, thus, public faith, thus, common honesty, are no more than arbitrary rules, which the people have, as yet, abstained from rescinding; and, when a confiscating majority should ordain otherwise, they would be no longer rules. Hence, the worshippers of this idol ascribe to it attributes inconsistent with all our ideas of the Supreme Being himself, to whom we deem it equally impious and absurd to impute injustice. Hence, they argue, that a public debt is a burden to be thrown off, whenever the people grow weary of it; and hence, they somewhat inconsistently pretend, that the very people cannot make a constitution, authorizing any restraint upon malicious lying against the government. So that, according to them, neither religion, nor morals, nor policy, nor the people them-

selves, can erect any barrier against the reasonable or the capricious exercise of their power. Yet what these cannot do, the spirit of sedition can; this is more sacred than religion or justice, and dearer than the general good itself. For it is evident, that, if we will have the unrestricted liberty of lying against our magistrates, and laws, and government, we can have no other liberty; and the clamorous jacobins have decided, that *such* liberty, without any other, is better than every other kind of liberty without *it*.

Is it true, however (if it be not rebellion to inquire), that this uncontrolled power of the people is their right, and that it is absolutely essential to their liberty? All our individual rights are to be exercised with due regard to the rights of others; they are tied fast by restrictions, and are to be exercised within certain reasonable limits. How is it, then, that the democrats find a right in the whole people so much more extensive, than what belongs to any one of their number? In other cases, the extremes of any principle are so many departures from principle. Why is it, then, that they make popular right to consist wholly in extremes, and that so absolutely, that, without such boundless pretensions, they say it could not subsist at all? Checks on the people themselves, are not merely clogs, but chains. They are *usurpations*, which should be abolished, even if in practice they prove useful; for, they will tell you, precedent sanctions and introduces tyranny. Neither Commodus nor Caligula were ever so flattered with regard to the extent of their power, and the impiety of setting bounds to it, as any people who listen to demagogues.

The writings of Thomas Paine, and the democratic

newspapers will evince, that this representation of their doctrine is not caricatured: it is not more extravagant than they represent it themselves. They often, indeed, affirm, that they are not admirers of a mere democracy: they know it will prove licentious: they are in favour of an energetic government.

It is both more satisfactory, and more safe, to trust to the *conduct* of a party, than their *professions*. Let the considerate friends of rational liberty decide then, from *facts*, from the most authentic and solemn transactions of the democratic party, whether there be any check, limitation, or control, that they would impose on the people; or any now existing, that they would not first weaken and then abolish. If the sober citizens really wish for a simple democracy, and that the power of the people shall be arbitrary and uncontrollable, then let them weigh the consequences well, before they consent to the tremendous changes that the government must undergo, before it will be fit for a democracy. Let them consider the sacrifices of liberty, as well as order, of blood, as well as treasure, that this sort of government never fails to exact; and if, on due reflection, they choose these consequences, then let them elect, and let them follow in arms, the men who are so much infatuated to bring them about; for "infuriated man will seek his long-lost liberty through desolation and carnage." If, however, they prefer the constitution, as it was made, and as it has been honestly administered, they will cling to the old cause which they have tried in trying times, and, of course, know how to value and to trust.

There is, perhaps, no country in the world, where visionary theory has done so much to darken political

knowledge, as in France, nor where facts appear at length so conspicuously to enlighten it. The doctrines of equality, and the rights of man, and the uncontrolled power of the people, whose voice is, rather unintelligibly, said to be the voice of God, have been so prevalent, that most persons have allowed the French to be political discoverers, and that they were certainly not God's, but some other being's chosen people, selected to preserve the true faith in politics from corruption and oblivion. These lofty claims French modesty urged in every country, as if they were Romans, and the others barbarians. Our *patriotic* sophists very meekly admitted their claim.

Time is as little a friend to folly, as to hypocrisy. It obliges the intemperate sometimes to be sober, and makes knavery tired of its mask. The French revolutionary government is now in its teens, and we are compelled, with some steadiness of attention, to behold those features, which democratic fondness shut its eyes to imagine were divine in its cradle. Never was popular admiration more extravagant; never were its disappointments more signal or complete. The French revolution is one of those dire events, that cannot happen without danger, nor end without advantage to mankind. It is a rare inundation, whose ravages show the utmost high-water mark: an earthquake, that has laid bare a mine; a comet, whose track through the sky, while it scatters pestilence, excites the curiosity of astronomers, and rewards it.

When the French revolution began, many of the best, and even some few of the wisest, rejoiced in some of the most pernicious and most absurd of its measures. Down with the nobles! was the cry of the

Tiers Etat, or third estate, and it was echoed here: let all the three orders vote in one chamber, in other words, let there be but one order, the democratic: *that* will rule, and the others bleed. Down with the priesthood! was the next cry: abuses so great have been tolerated too long: we reform too late, and therefore we cannot reform too much. The many millions of church property were, of course, by a simple vote of a majority, *re*-annexed, as they called robbery, to the nation. The nobles were next dismounted in an evening's sitting, and in a fit of emulation in extravagance. All was done without reasoning and by acclamation. The *sovereign* mob of the suburbs of Paris, called St. Antoine and Rue Marcel, were next employed. The Bastille was taken; liberty celebrated her triumphs, she trod upon a plain, on the rubbish of her tyrants' palaces, whose ruins were not left as high as their foundations. Her path seemed to be smooth; all obstacles were removed; all men were free and equal; those who had rescued liberty by their blood, were ready to shed it in her defence. Where are her friends? Behold them arrayed in armies, brandishing their pikes. Where are her enemies? See their heads dropping gore on those pikes. Is not the danger over? Is not the victory won? Are not the French free, and perfectly secure in their freedom?

Every sagacious democrat answered all these questions in the affirmative.

Nobody seemed any longer to have power, but the people. *They* had all power, and, of course, *unbounded* liberty. How little is it considered, that arbitrary power, no matter whether of prince or

people, makes tyranny; and that in salutary restraint is liberty. A stupid, ferocious multitude, who are unfit to be free, may play the tyrant for a day, just long enough to put a sceptre of iron into their leader's hand. To use quaint language, in order to be the more intelligible, it may be said, that, when there is no end to the power of a multitude, there can be no beginning to their liberty.

Review the transactions in France since 1789, and it will appear, that there is no condition of a state, in which it is more impossible that liberty should subsist, or more nearly impossible that, after being lost, it should be retrieved, than after order has been overthrown, and popular licentiousness triumphs in its stead.

The old government of France was a bad one; but the new order of things was infinitely worse. Most persons suppose this is to be ascribed to the *excess* of liberty; they think there was too much of a good thing. Now the truth is, there was no liberty at all—absolutely none from the first, no reasonable hope, scarcely a lucky chance for it. Who had liberty? Clearly not the king, the nobles, nor the priests, nor the king's ministers; all these were in jeopardy from the 14th July, 1789:—not the rich; they were robbed and driven into banishment:—not the great military officers, who had gained glory in the American war; they were slain:—not the farmers; their harvest and their sons were in requisition;—not the merchants; they were so stripped, that their race was extinct; they were known only on the grave-stones of Nantz and Lyons; they were remembered in France, like the mammoth, by their bones. But, say the democrats, *the people*, the *many*, in other

words, the rabble of the cities, were free: bread was issued to them by the public. Yes, but it was the bread of soldiers, for which they were enrolled as national guards, to uphold the tyranny of robbers and usurpers; and as soon as this very rabble reluctd at their work, the more desperate cut-throats from Marseilles were called for, to shoot them in the streets.

It is often said, that the monarchy of France was forcibly upheld by the army. There is much incorrectness in the prevailing notions on this point. Without pausing to consider them, it may be sufficient to say, that the leaders of the revolution, apprehending that they should have an army against them, very early determined that they would have also an army on their side. By a simple vote, raising the pay of the king's soldiers, they detached the troops from his side to their own; and, still further to augment their military force, they enlisted the rabble of all the cities as national guards. Thus France was still governed by an army, but this army was itself governed by new chiefs. The people were more than ever subject to military power.

Now it would be a pleasant task for the democratic declaimers to show, that *martial law* is *liberty;* and as there never was a half hour since July, 1789, when a man in France had any other rights, but such as that law saw fit to spare, they ought now to tell us, as they gave no reason at the time, *why* they roasted oxen on account of the triumphs of French liberty*.

The nature of that precious liberty deserves some further consideration.

* Let the sons of the jacobins tell us *why they* celebrated the glorious days of July.—Ed.

The French are very unjustly accused of having *lost* their liberty: they never had it. The old government was not a free one, and the violence that demolished it was not liberty. The leaders were, from the first, as much the sovereigns as the Bourbon kings. A mob would disperse in an hour without a leader, and that leader has immediately an authority, of all despots the most absolute, though the most precarious. To destroy the monarchy, the resort was to force, not to the people; and who, in those times of violence, had any liberty, but the possessors of that force? No liberty was then thought more valuable, than that of running away from mob-tyranny.

Accordingly, the standing army, which had been only two hundred thousand strong, was suddenly increased to half a million. The ruin of trade and manufactures compelled scores of thousands to become soldiers for bread. All France was soon filled with terror, pillage, and massacre. It is absurd, though for a time it was the fashion, to call that nation free, which was, at that very period of its supposed emancipation, subject to martial law, and bleeding under its lash. The rights of a Frenchman were never less, nor was there ever a time when he so little dared to resist, or even to complain.

The kings of France, it is true, had a great military force, but the new liberty-leaders had as much again. They used it, avowedly, to strike terror into those they were pleased to call counter-revolutionists; in other words, to drive into exile nearly a million nobles, priests, rich people, and women: every description of persons, whom they hated, feared, or wished to

plunder, was placed on the proscribed list. All the kings of France, from the days of Pharamond and Clovis, down to the last of the Bourbon race, did not exercise despotic power on so great a scale, nor with such horrid cruelty. If the French were slaves under their kings, their masters did not try to aggravate the weight of their chains: the people were sometimes spared because they were a property; because their kings had an interest in their lives, and some in their affections, but none in their sufferings. The *republican* French have not whispered their griefs, without hazard of a spy; they have not lingered in their servile tasks, without bleeding under the whips of their usurpers.

Yet this extremity of degradation and wretchedness has been celebrated as a triumph.

While the kings reigned, they permitted the laws to govern, at least, as much as their quiet and security would allow: and when they used military force to seize the members of the parliament of Paris, and to detain them prisoners for their opposition to their edicts, the ferment in the nation soon induced them to set them at liberty. Thus, it appears, that the rigours of despotism once had something existing to counteract and to soften them; but since the revolution, the popular passions have been invariably excited and employed to furnish arms to tyrants, and never to snatch them out of their hands; to overtake fugitive wretches, and to invent new torments.

This, bad as it is, is the natural course of things. Liberty is not to be enjoyed, indeed, it cannot exist, without the habits of just subordination: it consists, not so much in removing all restraint from the orderly,

as in imposing it on the violent. Now the first step in a revolution, is to make these restraints appear unjust and debasing, and to induce the multitude to throw them off; in other words, to give daggers to ruffians, and to lay bare honest men's hearts. By exalting their passions to rage and frenzy, and leading them on, before they cool, to take Bastilles, and overturn altars and thrones, a mad populace are well fitted for an army, but they are spoiled for a republic. Having enemies to contend with, and leaders to fight for, the contest is managed by force, and the victory brings joy only as it secures booty and vengeance. The conquering faction soon divides, and one part arrays its partisans in arms against the other; or, more frequently, by treachery and surprise cuts off the chiefs of the adverse faction, and they reduce it to weakness and slavery. Then more booty, more blood, and new triumphs for liberty.

It is not because there are not malcontents, it is not because tyranny has not rendered scores of thousands desperate, that civil war has not, without ceasing, ravaged that country. But the despotism, that continually multiplies wretches, carefully disarms them; it so completely engrosses all power to itself, as to discourage all resistance. Indeed, the only power in the state is that of the sword; and while the army obeys the general, the nation must obey the army. Hence it has been, that civil war has not raged. The people were nothing, and, of course, no party among them could prepare the force to resist the tyrants in Paris. Hence France has appeared to be tranquil in its slavery, and has been forced to celebrate feasts for the liberty it had *not*. They have

often changed their tyrants, but never their tyranny, not even in the mode and instruments of its operation. An armed force has been the only mode from the first, which free governments may render harmless, because they may keep it subordinate to the civil power: this despotic states cannot do.

The mock "*republican*" leaders, as they affect to call themselves, but the *jacobin* chiefs in this country, as they are known and called, are the close imitators of these French examples. They use the same popular cant, and address themselves to the same classes of violent and vicious rabble. Our Condorcets and Rolands are already in credit and in favour. It would not be difficult to show, that their notions of liberty are not much better than those of the French. If we adopt them, and attempt to administer our orderly and rightful government by the agency of the popular passions, we shall lose our liberty at first, and in the very act of making the attempt; next we shall see our tyrants invade every possession that could tempt their cupidity, and violate every right that could obstruct their rage.

Every democrat more or less firmly believes, that a revolution is the sure path to liberty; and, therefore, he believes government of little importance to the people, and very often the greatest impediment to their rights. Merely because the French had begun a revolution, and thrown every thing that was government, flat to the ground, they began to rejoice, because that nation had, *thus*, become the freest nation in the world. It is very probable many of the ignorant in France really thought so; it is lamentable, that many of the well-informed in this country fell into a like error.

It is essential, therefore, to review the history of that revolution, at least with so much attention as to deduce a few plain conclusions. Popular discontents naturally lead to a forcible resistance of government. The very moment the physical power of the people is thus employed to resist, the people themselves become *nothing*. They can only destroy; they cannot rule. They cannot act without chiefs; nor have chiefs, and keep rights. They are blind instruments in the hands of ambitious men; and, of necessity, act merely as they are acted upon. Each individual is nothing; but the chief, having the power of a great many to aid him, can overpower, and will destroy, any mutinous citizen, who presumes to find fault with his general's conduct. Thus a revolution produces a mob. A mob is at first an irregular, then a regular army, but in every stage of its progress, the mere blind instrument of its leaders. The power of an army, of necessity, falls into the hands of one man, the general-in-chief, who is the sole despot and master of the state.

Every thing in France has gone on directly contrary to all the silly expectations of the democrats, though most exactly in conformity with the laws of man's nature, and the evidence of history. If this kind of contemplation could cure our countrymen of their strange, and, perhaps it will prove, *fatal*, propensity to revolutionary principles, and induce them, in future, to prefer characters fitter to preserve order than to overthrow it, then we should grow wise by the direful experience of others. We might stop with our Rolands, without proceeding to our Dantons and Robespierres.

Another remark is, that these changes have no

tendency to establish liberty. A new struggle, like the old one, must be by violence, which can only give the sceptre to the most violent. The leaders will aim only at the *power to reign*, and it will not be their wish to lessen that power, which they hope to gain as a prize. The supreme power would not tempt them to such efforts, if it was to be made cheap and vile in their eyes, by bestowing it on the despised rabble of the cities and the common soldiery. These men are unfit for liberty; and, if they had it gained for them, would give it away to a demagogue, who would have, in six weeks, another army, and a new despotism, as hard to bear and to overturn as that which they had subverted. Nor could the leaders establish liberty, if they tried: the supreme power being military, the contest can only determine what general shall hold it. A military government, in fact, though often changing its chief, is capable of very long duration. Rome, Turkey, and Algiers, are examples: France may prove another.

Thus the progress of mob equality is invariably to despotism, and to a military despotism, which, by often changing its head, imbitters every one of the million of its curses, but which cannot change its nature. It renders liberty hopeless, and almost undesirable to its victims.

Chapter III.

A VIGOROUS EXERTION OF LAWFUL AUTHORITY, NOT PALLIATIVES, REQUIRED TO SUPPRESS TREASON.

The plans of an enlightened and permanent national policy may be defeated by, and, in fact, must depend upon the desperate ambition of the worst men in the commonwealth; upon the convenience of bankrupts and sots, who have gambled or slept away their estates; upon the sophisms of wrong-headed men of some understanding; and upon the prejudices, caprice, and ignorant enthusiasm of a multitude of tavern-haunting politicians, who have none at all. The supreme power of the state will be found to reside with such men; and in making laws, the object will not be the general good, but the will and interest of the vile legislators. This will be a government, not by laws, but by men, and the worst of men; and such men, actuated by the strongest passions of the heart, having nothing to lose, and hoping, from the general confusion, to reap a copious harvest, will acquire, in every society, a larger share of influence than property and abilities will give to better citizens. The motives to refuse obedience to government are many and strong; impunity will multiply and enforce them. Many men would rebel, rather than be ruined; but they would rather not rebel, than be hanged.

Many of the mob have been deluded with the pretence of grievances; but they well know, that the method of

redress, which they have sought, is treasonable; they dare to commit the offence, because they believe that government have not the power and spirit to punish them.

This seems, therefore, to be the time, and perhaps the only time, to revive just ideas of the criminality and danger of treason; *for our government to govern; for our rulers to vindicate the violated majesty of a free commonwealth; to convince the advocates of democracy, that the constitution may yet be defended, and that it is worth defending; that the supreme power is really held by the legal representatives of the people; that the county conventions, and riotous assemblies of armed men, shall no longer be allowed to legislate, and to form an* imperium in imperio; *and that the protection of government shall yet be effectually extended to every citizen of the commonwealth*.*

In a free government, the reality of grievances is no kind of justification of rebellion. It is hoped that our rulers will act with dignity and wisdom; that they will yield every thing to reason, and refuse every thing to force; that they will not consider any burden as a grievance, which it is the duty of the people to bear; but if the burden is too weighty for them to endure, that they will lighten it; *and that they will not descend to the injustice and meanness of purchasing leave to hold their authority, by sacrificing a part of the community to the villany and ignorance of the disaffected.*

* The italics are the Author's, not the Editor's; it is strange that the emphasis should now fall so justly, where Fisher Ames laid it when he wrote.

It may be very proper to use arguments, to publish addresses, and fulminate proclamations, against high treason: but the man who expects to disperse a mob of a thousand men, by ten thousand arguments, has certainly never been in one. I have heard it remarked, that men are not to be reasoned out of an opinion that they have not reasoned themselves into. The case, though important, is simple. Government does not subsist by making proselytes to sound reason. or by compromise and arbitration with its members; but by the power of the community compelling the obedience of individuals. If that is not done, who will seek its protection, or fear its vengeance? Government may prevail in the argument, and yet we may lose the constitution.

We have been told, that the hatchet of rebellion would be buried, at least till another occasion shall call it forth, provided all public and private debts be abolished, or, in lieu of such abolition, certain other measures be passed.

Here naturally arise two questions. In strict justice, ought our rulers to adopt any of these measures? And should they adopt any, or all of them, will the energy of government be restored, and the constitution be preserved?

As to the first question, who is there that keeps company with honest men, that will not give scope to the vehement detestation that he bears the idea? Is there a rogue in the state so hardened against shame and conscience, that he would consent to be, alone, the author of either of those measures? It is to be hoped that the time is not yet arrived, when the government of a *free* people is worse than the worst man in it.

But should government resolve, that a measure which is morally wrong is politically right; that it is necessary to sacrifice its friends and advocates to buy a truce from its foes; will those foes, having tasted the sweets of ruling, intermit their enterprises, while there is a remnant of authority left in the state to inflict punishments, and to impose taxes, and that authority is no longer formidable by the support of those men, whose rights have been already surrendered? Did cowardice, did injustice, ever save a sinking state? Did any man, by giving up a portion of his just right, because he had not courage to maintain it, ever save the residue? The insolence of the aggressor is usually proportioned to the tameness of the sufferer. Every individual has a right to tell his rulers, *I am one of the parties to the constitutional contract. I promised allegiance, and I require protection for my life and property. I am ready to risk both in your defence. I am competent to make my own contracts; and when they are violated, to seek their interpretation and redress in the judicial courts. I never gave you a right to interpose in them. Without my consent, or a crime committed, neither you, nor any individual, have a right to my property. I refuse my consent; I am innocent of any crime. I solemnly protest against the transfer of my property to my debtor. An act making paper, or swine, a tender, is a confiscation of my estate, and a breach of that compact, under which I thought I had secured protection. If ye say that the people are distressed, I ask, is the proposed relief less distressing? Relieve distress from your own funds; exercise the virtues of charity and compassion at*

your own charge, as I do. Am I to lose my property, and to be involved in distress, to relieve persons whom I never saw, and who are unworthy of compassion, if they accept the dishonest relief? If your virtues lead you to oppress me, what am I to expect from your vices? But if ye will suffer my life to depend upon the mercy of the MOB, *and my property upon their opinion of the expediency of my keeping it, at least restore me the right, which I renounced when I became a citizen, of vindicating my own rights, and avenging my own injuries.*

But, if the constitution must fall, let us discharge our duty, and attempt its defence. Let us not furnish our enemies with a triumph, nor the dishonoured page of history with evidence, THAT IT WAS FORMED WITH TOO MUCH WISDOM TO BE VALUED, AND REQUIRED TOO MUCH VIRTUE TO BE MAINTAINED BY ITS MEMBERS.

[Written in 1786, on occasion of Shay's Rebellion.]

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Experience, which makes individuals wise, sometimes makes a public mad: judging only by their feelings, disastrous events are usually charged to the agency of bad men; and, in the bustle excited by their vindictive zeal, the precious lessons of adversity are lost. It belongs to the sage politician to draw from such events, just maxims of policy, for the future benefit of mankind; and it belongs to mankind to keep these maxims accumulating, by repeating the same blunders, and pursuing the same phantoms, with equal ignorance, and equal ardour, to the end of the world. This disposition is so obvious, that proof cannot be needed.

But the public attention is now awake, and this is the favourable moment to induce the people, by a retrospect of their errors, to renounce them; to place confidence in their rulers, and in the permanency and energy of our constitution; and to unite in the patriotic sentiment, that it is indispensably necessary to the general prosperity, and to the very existence of government, that the reins should be resumed and held with a firmer hand; and that palliatives and half expedients, and the projects of factious ignorance will not avail.

Politics have produced enthusiasts, as well as religion; and in the theory of our constitution they could trace their fancied model of perfection. To the mind of the dreamer in speculation, the government was a phantom; and to adorn it, his fancy had stolen from the evening cloud the gaudiest of its hues: he had dipped his pencil in the rainbow to portray a picture of national felicity, for admiration to gaze at. Then

was the time to tell of virtue being raised from the dungeon, where priests and tyrants had confined her: and that science had been courted from the skies to meet her; then was the time to talk of restoring the golden age, without being laughed at; and many seemed to believe, that a political millennium was about to commence.

But here end our heroes. When they quitted the theory, to attend to the administration of government, they descended to vulgar prose. They found, that their admired plan of freedom of election, had produced a too faithful representation of the electors; and that something more, and something worse than the public wisdom and integrity were represented. They often heard the unmeaning din of vulgar clamour excited, to make that odious which was right, and that popular, which was wrong.

They well knew, that the laws were made supreme, and that politics should have no passions. Yet it was soon perceived, that the legislators themselves sometimes felt, and too often feared and obeyed, the sudden passions, and ignorant prejudices of their constituents. They expected a government by laws, and not by men; and they were chagrined to see, that the feelings of the people were not only consulted in all instances, but that, in many, they were allowed to legislate. They had hoped, that the supreme power would prove, to all legal purposes, omnipotent; and they were thrown into absolute despair, when they found, that not only individuals, but conventions, and other bodies of men, unknown to the constitution, presumed to revise, and, in effect, to repeal, the acts of the legislature.

We cannot look back, without terror, upon the dangers we have escaped. Our country has stood upon the verge of ruin. Divided against itself; the ties of common union dissolved; all parties claiming authority, and refusing obedience; every hope of safety, except one, has been extinguished; and that has rested solely upon the prudence and firmness of our rulers. Fortunately, they have been uninfected with the frenzy of the times. They have done their duty, and have shown themselves the faithful guardians of liberty, as well as of power. But much remains to do. Sedition, though intimidated, is not disarmed.

This is a crisis in our affairs, which requires all the wisdom and energy of government: for every man of sense must be convinced, that our disturbances have arisen more from the want of power, than the abuse of it; from the relaxation, and almost annihilation of the authority of our government; from the feeble, unsystematic, temporizing, inconstant character of our public policy; and from the astonishing enthusiasm and perversion of principles among the people. It is not extraordinary that commotions have been excited. It is strange, under the circumstances which we have been discussing, that they did not appear sooner, and terminate more fatally. For, let it be remarked, that a feeble government produces more factions than an oppressive one: the want of power first makes individuals legislators, and then rebels. Where parents want authority, children are wanting in duty. It is not possible to advance further in the same path. Here the ways divide; the one will conduct us first to anarchy, and next to foreign or domestic tyranny; the other, by the wise and vigorous exertion of lawful

authority, will lead to permanent power, and general prosperity.

I am no advocate for despotism; but I believe the probability to be much less of its being introduced by the corruption of our rulers, than by the delusion of the people. Experience has demonstrated that new maxims of administration are indispensable. It is not, however, by sixpenny retrenchments of salaries; nor by levying war against any profession of men; nor by giving substance and existence to the frothy essences and fantastic forms of speculation; nor is it by paper money, or an abolition of debts; nor by implicit submission to the insolence of beggarly conventions; nor by the temporary expedients of little minds, that authority can be rendered stable, and the people prosperous. A well-digested, liberal, permanent system of policy is required; and, when adopted, must be supported, in spite of faction, against every thing but amendment.

The writer would warn his countrymen, that our commonwealth stands upon its probation. If we make a wise use of the advantages, which, with innumerable mischiefs, recent experience has afforded, our government may last. This is the tide in our affairs, which, if taken at the flood, will lead to glory. If we neglect it, ruin will be inevitable. It is in vain to expect security in future merely from the general conviction that government is necessary, and that treason is a crime. It is vain to depend upon that virtue, which is said to sustain a commonwealth. This is the high-flown nonsense of philosophy, which experience daily refutes. It is still more absurd, to expect to prevent commotions by conforming the laws to popular

humours, so that faction shall have nothing to complain of, and folly nothing to ask for.

There is in nature, and there must be in the administration of government, a fixed rule and standard of political conduct, and that is, the greatest permanent happiness of the greatest number of the people. If we substitute for these maxims, the wild projects which fascinate the multitude in daily succession, we may amuse ourselves with extolling the nice proportions, and splendid architecture of our constitutional fabric; but it will be no better than a magnificent temple of ice, which the first south wind of sedition will demolish.

Anarchy and government are both before us, and in our choice. If we fall, we fall by our folly, not our fate. And we shall evince to the astonished world, of how small influence to produce national happiness, are the fairest gifts of heaven, a healthy climate, a fruitful soil, and inestimable laws, when they are conferred upon a frivolous, perverse, and ungrateful generation.

[Written in 1787, after the suppression of Shay's Insurrection, and previous to the Establishment of the Federal System.]

Chapter IV.

THE CHARACTER OF JACOBINISM.

Faction will freedom, like its shade, pursue;
Yet, like the shadow, proves the substance true.

We have to sustain an everlasting conflict with Faction, a foe, destined to be the companion of Liberty, and, at last, its assassin. However we may flatter ourselves with the idea, that our blows will prove fatal to this foe, yet, though smitten to the ground, it will rise again like Antæus, untired, invulnerable, and immortal.

Nothing can more strikingly illustrate the folly of the jacobins, in their pretensions to a superior vigilance for the *people*, than the natural, and indeed, experienced tendency of their turbulence to strengthen the powers of government. The danger these men create, must be repelled by arming our rulers with force enough, and appointing them to watch in our stead. Thus good citizens find, that they must submit to laws of the more rigour, because the desperate licentiousness and wickedness of the bad could not be otherwise restrained. If the laws they complain of really abridge liberty, as they pretend, which, however, is positively denied, it is their own wickedness that has supplied to government the pretext, and varnished it over with the appearance of necessity. Quiet, satisfied people, need the least law; but as the jacobins are of a very different character, it is clear that all the fruit of their

perverseness must be to abridge the liberty of the people; and this too if they fail of success. But if they should prevail, the *people* would be crushed, as in France, under tyranny more vindictive, unfeeling, and rapacious, than that of Tiberius, Nero, or Caligula, or any single despot that ever existed.

The rage of one man will be tired by repetition of outrage, or it may be eluded by art or by flight. It seldom smites the obscure, who are many, but, like a gust, uproots chiefly the great trees that overtop the forest. A mobocracy, however, is always usurped by the worst men in the most corrupt times; in a period of violence by the most violent. It is a Briareus with a thousand hands, each bearing a dagger; a Cerberus gaping with ten thousand throats, all parched and thirsting for fresh blood. It is a genuine tyranny, but of all the least durable, yet the most destructive while it lasts. The power of a despot, like the ardour of a summer's sun, dries up the grass, but the roots remain fresh in the soil; a mob-government, like a West India hurricane, instantly strews the fruitful earth with promiscuous ruins, and turns the sky yellow with pestilence. Men inhale a vapour like the Sirocco, and die in the open air for want of respiration. It is a winged curse that envelops the obscure as well as the distinguished, and is wafted into the lurking-places of the fugitives. It is not doing justice to licentiousness, to compare it to a wind which ravages the surface of the earth; it is an earthquake that loosens its foundations, burying in an hour the accumulated wealth and wisdom of ages.

Those, who, after the calamity, would reconstruct the edifice of the public liberty, will be scarcely able

to find the model of the artificers, or even the ruins. Mountains have split and filled the fertile valleys, covering them with rocks and gravel; rivers have changed their beds; populous towns have sunk, leaving only frightful chasms, out of which are creeping the remnant of living wretches, the monuments and the victims of despair. This is no exaggerated description. Behold France, that open hell, still ringing with agonies and blasphemies, still smoking with sufferings and crimes, in which we see their state of torment, and perhaps our future state. There we see the wretchedness and degradation of a people, who once had the offer of liberty, but have trifled it away; and there we have seen crimes so monstrous, that, even after we know they have been perpetrated, they still seem incredible.

If, however, the real people will wake, when their own government is in danger; if, like a body of minute-men, they will rally in its defence, we may long preserve our excellent system unimpaired in the degree of its liberty; we may preserve every thing but our tranquillity.

It is, however, difficult, if not impossible, to excite and maintain as much zeal and ardour in defence of government, as will animate the jacobins for its subversion; for to them action is ease, to us it is effort: to be at rest costs them more constraint, than us to stir. The machinery of our zeal is wrought by a feeble and intermitting momentum, and is impeded by its own friction; their rage beats like the pulse of life, and to stop it would be mortal. Like the whirlwind it clears away obstacles, and gathers speed in its progress.

Any great exertion not only tires but disgusts us; our spirit, after flaming brightly, soon sleeps in its embers; but the jacobins, like salamanders, can breathe only in fire. Like toads, they suck no aliment from the earth but its poisons. When they rest in their lurking-places, it is like serpents in winter, the better to concoct their venom; and when they are in action it is to shed it.

Without digressing to make an analysis of the jacobin character, whether it is envy that sickens at the fame of superiors, cupidity that seeks political power for the sake of plunder, or ambition that considers plunder as the instrument to get power; whether their characters are formed by the weak facility of their faith, or their faith determined by the sour, malignant, and suspicious cast of their temperament, yet all agree in this one point, all are moved by some fixed prejudice or strong passion, some powerful spring of action, so blended with self-interest or self-love, and so exalted into fanaticism, that the ordinary powers of the man, and the extraordinary powers conferred on the enthusiast, are equally devoted to their cause of anarchy. Hatred of the government becomes a mania, a *dementia quoad hoc*, and their dread of all power but their own, resembles the hydrophobia, baffling our attempts to describe its nature or its remedies.

These are the fanatics whom the lovers of the constitution must oppose; and what in common times is to excite their zeal, and secure the constancy of their opposition? A sense of duty, which a few men of abstraction will deduce from just principles, and the foresight of a few more, who will be terrified by the tendencies of democracy to anarchy? But sober duty, and a timor-

ous forecast are feeble antagonists against jacobinism; it is flat tranquillity against passion; dry leaves against the whirlwind; the weight of gunpowder against its kindled force. Such men may serve as weather-cocks, to show how the wind blows, but are no shelter against its violence. The quiet citizens may be compared to the still water in the lake; the jacobins to that part of it which falls over a cataract at its outlet: the former having a thousand times the greatest mass, but no energy, and scarcely motion enough to keep it sweet; the latter dashed into foam, and scooping deeper channels in the rocks of adamant. To weight we must impart motion; correct good sense must acquire the energy of zeal. A score of absurd cant opinions must be scouted, all which tend to make us like the jacobin designs a little more, and to dread and abhor their agents a little less.

Take a specimen of the proselyting logic: the jacobins, they tell us, are, many of them, *honest men, but misled.* Whether they will long remain honest, yet the associates of knaves, and their fellow-workers of iniquity, may be doubted. If the invectives against those, who insist on being called honest, among the jacobins, are "too harsh and acrimonious" to-day, they will by to-morrow, or the next day, be sufficiently assimilated to the company they keep, and the designs they pursue, to merit them: they get a character for life only one day too soon. Besides, it is not the character of an odd man or two, or at most, of half a dozen in a state, that happens to have a head too thick to admit, or too hot to yield to the principles of the party, that is, to denominate the exact dark hue of the vice, or the precise measure of infamy that belongs of right to the party.

Let jacobinism triumph, ashamed neither of its character, nor afraid of its punishment, but indulging the unrestrained propensities of its nature, and then decide, reader, if you can, that the victims of law are a worse set of men than its conquerors.

It must be remembered, too, that public opinion is the great auxiliary of good government. Where can its weight fall so properly as on the conspirators who disturb its tranquillity, and plot its subversion? The man, who, from passion, or folly, or bad company, happens to believe, that liberty will rise, when government sinks, may be less criminal, but little less contemptible for his sincerity. If a madman should poison a spring, because he fancies, that all, who drink and die, will go to heaven and be happy, is he to be soothed and indulged? Will you let him have his way? Are you not to tell those who are thirsty, and about to drink the poisonous water, that it is death? Will it be against "candour and decency" to tell them, that the man is mad? The gentle critics on the style of those writers who support the constitution, would have that scorn withheld, which is almost the only thing that actually restrains the jacobins from mischief; that scorn, which makes those who might be misled, ashamed to join them. The factious have the cunning to say, that the bitterness of their spirit is owing to the harsh and acrimonious treatment they receive; as if reproach had made them jacobins; whereas, it is jacobinism that extorts reproach. Let jacobin vice be seen as a monster, and let not a mock candour pity, till we embrace it. The vain, the timid, and trimming, must be made by examples, to see, that scorn smites, and blasts, and withers like lightning, the knaves that

mislead them. Then let the misled *many* come off and leave the party if they will; if not, let them club it with them for the infamy.

A frame of government less free and popular, might, perhaps, have been left to take some care of itself; but the people choose to have it as it is, and, therefore, they must not complain of the burden, but come forward and support it: it has not strength to stand alone without such help from the wise and honest citizens. The time to do this is at the elections. There, if any where, the sovereignty of the citizen is to be exercised; and there the privilege is open to the most excessive and most fatal abuse.

The jacobins know, that they are as yet, weak in force, though powerful in lies and low cunning. They will not appear in arms at present, for that would make their weakness the antagonist of our strength. But lies and cunning are always formidable at elections: thus they oppose their strength to our weakness; we cannot and will not resort to lies. But we can overmatch them when we take the alarm in season, and rouse the constitutional zeal: that zeal has more than once saved the country. Now is the time and the occasion, again to display it, for the faction turns its evil eyes to the elections; and, if they obtain even a large minority, they will spread the infection with more ardour than even a majority; as minorities are ever the most industrious, and most firmly united. So large a mass of poison in the representative body, lying in fermentation for a year, would vitiate and corrupt our political health; and, by another year, a jacobin majority would appear there to overturn, and overturn, and overturn, till property shall take wings,

and true liberty and good government find their graves. Friends of virtue, if you will not attend the election, and lend to liberty the help of your votes, within two years, you will have to defend her cause with your swords.

To some, this warmth will appear excessive, and to others, altogether superfluous: *excessive*, because, they urge, the feelings of the jacobins ought to be treated with more tenderness, and their designs with more candour; and *superfluous*, because the political sky is bright and unclouded, promising the long continuance of fair weather. The adoption of either of these opinions would have an influence with the writer; the first would change his style, the latter impose silence. He believes that the jacobin *faction* is composed, like every other, of ambitious knaves who mislead, and of a weak and infatuated rabble who are misled. Among the latter, are numbers who set out *honest*, and, while they continue so, they are deserving of some indulgence, and there is some hope of reclaiming a *very few* of them; but if they travel far on the party road, or associate long with the desperadoes in the van, who explore the thorny and crooked by-ways, they will not *remain honest*. They will be corrupted, and so deeply, that, in every approach towards civil war and revolution, the dupes, who sincerely believe the whole creed of their party, will be found ready to go the farthest. After they have thrown off all political duty, the remains of *other* moral principles, which *the philosophers* would call the *prejudices* of education, will be just sufficient to prevent remorse or to stifle it.

There is a sophistry in all the passions, and that of every strong one is almost always convincing. We

see accordingly that men of some morals, when they run politically mad, far from flinching from the debasing company of knaves, whom party dubs *patriots*, make open profession of their monstrous principles, and hardily vindicate their most desperate designs. It is a fact, the talk of the jacobins, and even their printed threats, are to demolish bank property and funded debt, and to wreak vengeance on the aristocrats, meaning the possessors of property. How many have seen with complacency, nay, with joy and exultation, the downfal of priests, and creeds, and churches in France? The unspeakable cruelties and crimes exercised against Catholics, they tell us, will introduce the true worship, and that they admire, and we are bound to approve, proceedings that *are* so wicked, because they *will be* so useful. The sophistry that can thus silence conscience and varnish crimes, has no less succeeded in blinding the understandings of these *honest jacobins* (so called) to the absolute falsehood of their political notions.

France has confessedly lost liberty, and the spirit and love of it, and has become infatuated with the passion for rapine and conquest; yet they still insist that, though France has *not* liberty at present, she *will* have it. Is the writer to blame, if he feels contempt for opinions like these? If, notwithstanding their absurdity, and indeed for the very reason that they are absurd, he sees that they are contagious, and knows that they are dangerous; if he sees their propagators formidable by their zeal, and the more formidable for its blindness, digging their mines and laying their trains of gunpowder to blow up the temple of liberty, is it possible for him to feel con-

tempt in silence, or can he express it without a mixture of detestation and abhorrence? The party who thus labour to destroy all that we have toiled and fought for, and *sworn* to preserve, is surely, collectively speaking, the proper object of our considerate indignation; nor can there be any *unfitness*, any want of *candour*, any departure from the line of *policy*, in exhibiting the picture of this party, *as it is*.

The inevitable effect of this picture is to excite aversion, scorn, and terror: the fault of rousing these unpleasant emotions, in all their strength, is not in the painter, it is in the *subject*. Let the soft seekers of popularity dream of soothing parties into moderation. Let them compose new homilies for hypocrisy to inculcate upon citizens brotherly love towards amiable, *patriotic*, traitors, and upon government forbearance to make or execute laws against *inoffensive* conspiracies. The scorn that is poured upon them is the greatest obstacle they encounter in their more than Jesuit labours of making converts to jacobinism; and the dread and abhorrence, in which the party and their schemes are held, is the chief auxiliary of good government in preventing their success. It is the squeamishness, the trimming, half-way, selfish spirit of too many of the friends of government, that keep the faction encouraged to prosecute its pestilent designs. Till our spirit is roused, all things will seem to be possible to party, and therefore all evil things will be attempted. If we allow ourselves to hope any respite from the assaults of tbe French faction, it is by animating the zeal of the friends of virtue and government, and persuading them to come forth and to speak out, and thus we shall discourage and disarm

the factious: their affected moderation must not rob the cause of half its support. It is indeed evident, that the spirit of the friends of order is at all times weak, excepting only when the danger is so near and obvious as to rouse an universal alarm and a common exertion. A correct view of the character of jacobinism, if once clearly taken and profoundly impressed upon the public, would keep those well-grounded apprehensions constantly awake, which in effect are the guardians of our political safety.

I will not therefore admit, that the task of delineating the true character of the *deluded* mass of the jacobins is unnecessary, or that by adhering to truth there will be a deviation from urbanity and candour. I will raise my feeble voice to expose the frailty of those hopes, which too many repose on the *honesty* of the factious, and which incline them to behold the desperation of their measures without much fear, because they trust that the individuals of the party will flinch as soon as things approach towards extremities. This trust is a vain one. I am as ready as others to make excuses for the deluded of all parties. Of all the causes of seduction from virtue, perhaps none is so powerful as the fellowship of party. But what then? Are we still to maintain that party men are *honest*, when they have been long exposed to an influence, which we know is almost irresistibly corrupting? We may, and we ought, on this account, the more deeply to deplore the ravages of the spirit of faction upon morals and the sentiments of humanity. We are not, however, to deny the fact, and insist upon reposing our confidence in the correct moral discernment of men, whom we know to be deluded, nor

in the restraints of shame and principle upon those minds, which have already overcome the shame of their principles and their associates. We may be sure, that more than half the utmost corrupting work of political vice is already done, and that the reputed honest men of the faction have either renounced their old principles, or dismissed them as the guides of their conduct. It is a cruel mercy, that would spare the party, because some of the individuals mean well. The plain truth should be told; it may alarm a few, and save them from being traitors.

Some labour to exhibit a brief analysis will be proper, as it will tend to excite the supporters of the constitution to a sense of their actual danger, and disarm the host of trimmers and political hypocrites of a topic which they never fail to urge upon our politeness and good nature, whenever they would abate the scorn that is thrown upon one party, or quench the sparks of that zeal which is too rarely excited in the other.

Supposing the *honest* among the jacobins to possess the ordinary degrees of self-knowledge, on looking inward they will find there a consciousness of some moral principle, of some integrity of heart. This will make them less distrustful of themselves, less apprehensive of the reproaches of others; and having adopted erroneous political maxims, they will pursue their dark mazes with a fearless step. The ill consequences, though natural, not being foreseen, will seem to proceed from accident, and only stimulate their perseverance, or to be owing to the malice of the concealed aristocrats, and inflame with a tenfold heat the rancour of their hostility. What was error be-

comes passion. The *honest* man thinks that he is summoned to the combat: the casuistry of a jacobin conscience spreads a mist before *his* eyes, which he thinks renders him invisible; obstinacy cases him in mail; French humanity puts a dagger into one hand, and party zeal, calling itself patriotism, a fire-brand into the other. Thus the *honest* jacobin, equally misled by what he knows, and by the nature of his own principles and their tendencies, goes forth to assist knaves in what he deems the cause of *virtue*. He has so many excuses in the good motives, which he is sure he does feel, and in the happy consequences, which he thinks he certainly does foresee, that he makes haste to spread ruin without compunction, and to perpetrate crimes without remorse.

Every intelligent politician knows, that, in all party affairs, the unthinking dupes and honest fools are the rashest. The crimes they can excuse, and even persuade themselves to call virtues, they do not blush to commit. They are not afraid of shame, because they adopt the creed of their teachers, and glory in it. They dance on the edge of a precipice, and think it a firm plain all round their feet. They foresee but little, and dread little of what they foresee. Little deterred by unforeseen danger, and strongly allured by imaginary good, that will be the sure reward of their patriot labours, if successful, the duty to struggle for that success appears to be superior to every other. The best institutions, the great safeguards of order, seem to them abuses: government is an obstacle, and must be removed; magistrates are enemies, and must be conquered. They at last make conscience of committing the most shocking atrocities,

and learn to throw their eyes beyond the gulf of revolution, confusion, and civil war, which yawns at their feet, to behold an Eden of primitive innocence, equality, and liberty, in blossom on the other side. There these tigers of revolution, their leaders, are to lie down with the lamb-like multitude, sometimes suffering hunger, yet forbearing to eat them. The rights of man are to be established by being solemnly proclaimed, and printed, so that every citizen shall have a copy. Avarice, ambition, revenge, and rage, will be disenchanted from all hearts, and die there; man will be regenerated; by slaying half a million only once, four millions will be born twice, and the glorious work of that perfectibility of the species, foretold by Condorcet and the Mazzei sect in America, will begin.

The knaves, however, who lead this infatuated *honest* multitude, indulge no such extravagant delusions. They have no faith in this splendid hereafter, this happy *future* state for jacobins in *this* world. They have as little taste for it. They propose other rewards for their patriotic virtue, than this heaven of metaphysics has laid up for them. Turning to their own base hearts, they shrink from themselves, and are more likely to feel remorse, than their *honest* disciples; they are conscious, that they ought to be suspected, and they act with the caution that this consciousness inevitably inspires; their dupes act with a fervour, and rage, and thirst for innovation, which render the prospects of all possible confusion insufficient to satisfy them. The cold thinking villains who lead, "whose black blood runs temperately bad," desire on the contrary no more confusion than just enough to

answer their own ends: their ambition would naturally desire to preserve the powers of government to usurp them, and their rapacity would spare the wealth of the state to plunder it. A fresh set would indeed succeed, as in France, and rob the first despoilers, till the State, successively a prey, would be reduced to beggary and ruin. It is seldom that the leaders of revolutions have much profited by them; and this shows the shortsightedness even of *their* policy, and that, as it relates to their own personal advantage, they are nearly as much deluded as their dupes. But the possession of the sovereign power, however precarious, is too great a temptation for their prudence to withstand. Accordingly we see, that for such a prize, competitors are never wanting; and they struggle for the imperial purple with as much ardour and fierceness, as if it were not wet and dropping with the blood of its last usurper. Robespierre's fall incited more pretenders than it intimidated.

It will be objected, that this open avowal of contempt and detestation of the jacobins, and this unreserved exhortation to all friends of government to inculcate these sentiments, can only exasperate party animosities and augment their mutual virulence. I ask in reply, would my silence, or the most soothing style of address I could choose, prevent or compose these animosities? Is it in the nature of free governments to exist without parties? Such a thing has never yet been, and probably never will be. Is it in the nature of party to exist without passion? or of passion to acquiesce, when it meets with opposers and obstacles? Is it owing, do the vapid declaimers really think in good faith, to the intemperance or indiscretion

of writers in defence of the constitution, that jacobins are restless and malignant? or that, by changing epithets, or lavishing lying praises on their *honesty*, they would change their nature and renounce their designs? No, it is absurd to expect faction cold in the pursuit of great objects, reasonable in selecting means for gratifying inordinate designs, retarded by moral doubts and perplexities, when led by *philosophers*, soft to persuade, when it is callous to pity, and fearless of consequences. Party moderation is children's talk. Who has ever seen faction *calmly* in a rage? Who will expect to see that carnivorous monster quietly submit to eat grass?

The critics on this performance may be assured, therefore, that, if no good is done by it, it will not do the mischief they apprehend. Parties will hate each other a little less for mutual plain-dealing and freedom of speech; for they never hate with more inveteracy than when they condescend to soothe and to flatter.

There are some who will admit that the spirit of party is virulent, and its principles and designs utterly profligate, who will, nevertheless, scruple to say, that the present state of affairs is such as to demand an alarming appeal to the patriotism of the citizens.

A faction whose union is perfect,—whose spirit is desperate,—addressing something persuasive to every prejudice; putting something combustible to every passion; granting some indulgence to every vice; promising those who dread the law to set them above it; to the mean, whispering suspicion; to the ambitious, offering power; to the rapacious, plunder; to the violent, revenge; to the envious, the abasement of all that is venerable; to innovators, the transmutation

of all that is established; grouping together all that is folly, vice and passion in the state, and forming of these vile materials another state,—an *imperium in imperio*. Behold! this is our condition—these our terrors. And what are the resources for our safety? They all exist in the energy and correctness of the public opinion. A thousand proofs exist, but the fact is so notorious, that it is needless to vouch them, to show, that our government has been, and is supported only by the appeal to the virtue, zeal, and patriotism of the *body of the citizens*.

When the instances are so recent that the pulse of alarm has scarcely yet ceased to flutter, will any man of common sense pretend to say, that our government stands unshaken upon a foundation of rock? that the sounds of alarm are counterfeit or imaginary? that faction is impotent or contemptible? At this day, the sound of alarm ought not to surprise, it should animate. Liberty is held by the tenure of continuing worthy to hold it: we have to choose between the burden of its duties and its destiny. It has even been deemed the Hesperian fruit, but since the days of fable it was never yet guarded by dragons. Why then, will any one reprove the writer for attempting to rouse the vigilance of the citizens? It is for them as a body and individually, to form a life-guard to protect it from assassination.

Chapter V.

THE PATRIOTISM OF WASHINGTON EXHIBITED IN HIS RESISTANCE TO THE SPIRIT OF THE AGE.

Party forms a state within the state, and is animated by a rivalship, fear, and hatred, of its superior. When this happens, the merits of the government will become fresh provocations and offences, for they are the merits of an enemy. No wonder, then, that as soon as party found the virtue and glory of Washington were obstacles, the attempt was made, by calumny, to surmount them both. For this, the greatest of all his trials, we know that he was prepared. He knew, that the government must possess sufficient strength from within or without, or fall a victim to faction. This *interior* strength was plainly inadequate to its defence, unless it could be reinforced from *without* by the zeal and patriotism of the citizens; and this latter resource was certainly as accessible to President Washington, as to any chief magistrate that ever lived.

While the president was thus administering the government in so wise and just a manner, as to engage the great majority of the enlightened and virtuous citizens to co-operate with him for its support, and while he indulged the hope that time and habit were confirming their attachment, the French revolution had reached that point in its progress, when its terrible principles began to agitate all civilized nations. I will not, on this occasion, stop to express, though my thoughts teem with it, my

deep abhorrence of that revolution; its despotism, by the mob or the military, from the first, and its hypocrisy of morals to the last. Scenes have passed there which exceed description, and which, for other reasons, I will not attempt to describe; for it would not be possible, even at this distance of time, and with the sea between us and France, to go through with the recital of them, without perceiving horror gather, like a frost, about the heart, and almost stop its pulse. That revolution has been constant in nothing but its vicissitudes, and its promises; always delusive, but always renewed, to establish philosophy by crimes, and liberty by the sword. The people of France, if they are not like the modern Greeks, find their cap of liberty is a soldier's helmet: and with all their imitation of dictators and consuls, their exactest similitude to these Roman ornaments is in their chains. The nations of Europe perceive another resemblance, in their all-conquering ambition.

But it is only the influence of that event on America, and on the measures of the president, that belongs to my subject. It would be ungratefully wrong to his character, to be silent in respect to a part of it, which has the most signally illustrated his virtues.

The genuine character of that revolution is not even yet so well understood, as the dictates of self-preservation require it should be. The chief duty and care of all governments is to protect the rights of property, and the tranquillity of society. The leaders of the French revolution, from the beginning, excited the poor against the rich. This has made the rich poor, but it will never make the poor rich. On

the contrary, they were used only as blind instruments to make those leaders masters, first of the adverse party, and then of the state. Thus the powers of the state were turned round into a direction exactly contrary to the proper one, not to preserve tranquillity and restrain violence, but to excite violence by the lure of power, and plunder, and vengeance. Thus all France has been, and still is, as much the prize of the ruling party, as a captured ship, and if any right or possession has escaped confiscation, there is none that has not been liable to it.

Thus it clearly appears, that, in its origin, its character, and its means, the government of that country is revolutionary; that is, not only different from, but directly contrary to, every regular and well-ordered society. It is a danger, similar in its kind, and at least equal in degree, to that, with which ancient Rome menaced her enemies. The allies of Rome were slaves; and it cost some hundred years' efforts of her policy and arms, to make her enemies her allies. Nations, at this day, can trust no better to treaties; they cannot even trust to arms, unless they are used with a spirit and perseverance becoming the magnitude of their danger. For the French revolution has been, from the first, hostile to all right and justice, to all peace and order in society; and, therefore, its very existence has been a state of warfare against the civilized world, and most of all, against free and orderly republics, for such are never without factions, ready to be the allies of France, and to aid her in the work of destruction. Accordingly, scarcely any but republics have they subverted. Such governments, by showing in practice what

republican liberty *is*, detect French imposture, and show what their pretexts are *not*.

To subvert them, therefore, they had, besides the facility that faction affords, the double excitement of removing a reproach, and converting their greatest obstacles into their most efficient auxiliaries.

Who, then, on careful reflection, will be surprised, that the French and their partisans instantly conceived the desire, and made the most powerful attempts, to revolutionize the American government? But it will hereafter seem strange that their excesses should be excused, as the effects of a struggle for liberty; and that so many of our citizens should be flattered, while they were insulted with the idea, that our example was copied, and our principles pursued. Nothing was ever more false, or more fascinating. Our liberty depends on our education, our laws, and habits, to which even prejudices yield; it is founded on morals and religion, whose authority reigns in the heart; and on the influence these produce on public opinion, before *that* opinion governs rulers. *Here* liberty is restraint; *there* it is violence: *here* it is mild and cheering, like the morning sun of our summer, brightening the hills, and making the valleys green; *there* it is like the sun, when his rays dart pestilence on the sands of Africa.

Jacobinism had become here, as in France, rather a sect than a party, inspiring a fanaticism that was equally intolerant and contagious. The delusion was general enough to be thought the voice of the people, therefore, claiming authority without proof, and jealous enough to exact acquiescence without a murmur of contradiction. Some progress was made

in training multitudes to be vindictive and ferocious. To them, nothing seemed amiable, but the revolutionary justice of Paris; nothing terrible, but the government and justice of America. The very name of *patriots* was claimed and applied, in proportion as the citizens had alienated their hearts from America, and transferred their affections to their foreign corrupter. Party discerned its intimate connexion of interest with France, and consummated its profligacy by yielding to foreign influence.

The systematic operations of a faction under foreign influence had begun to appear, and were successively pursued, in a manner too deeply alarming to be soon forgotten. Who of us does not remember this worst of evils in this worst of ways? Shame would forget, if it could, that, in one of the states, amendments were proposed to break down the federal senate, which, as in the state governments, is a great bulwark of the public order. To break down another, an extravagant judiciary power was claimed for states. In another state, a rebellion was fomented by the agent of France: and who, without fresh indignation, can remember, that the powers of government were openly usurped, troops levied, and ships fitted out to fight for her? Nor can any true friend to our government consider without dread, that, soon afterwards, the treaty-making power was boldly challenged for a branch of the government, from which the constitution has wisely withholden it.

I am oppressed, and know not how to proceed with my subject. Washington, blessed be God! who endued him with wisdom, and clothed him with power; Washington issued his proclamation of

neutrality, and, at an early period, arrested the intrigues of France, and the passions of his countrymen, on the very edge of the precipice of war and revolution.

This act of firmness, at the hazard of his reputation and peace, entitles him to the name of the first of patriots. Time was gained for the citizens to recover their virtue and good sense, and they soon recovered them. The crisis was passed, and America was saved.

It is impossible to advert to the name of Washington, so dear to every lover of freedom, without paying his memory the highest tribute of veneration. History records not a nobler example of self-renunciation, and more unwearied devotedness to his country. Our admiration for the man does not require us to coincide in all the abstract notions of the theory of government entertained by this first and greatest President of the United States. His views and measures, in the exercise of the powers of government, were in perfect accordance with those of Fisher Ames, and in direct opposition to those entertained by many here, who are too ready to avail themselves of the authority of his name.

Far be it from me, to charge men with intentional dishonesty, in mistaking the republican for the democrat, and in assuming Washington to have held such principles, as they think he ought to have held, but which are in positive variance with those he did hold. Such men care nothing for liberty but its name, "which is as much the end as the instrument of party, and equally fills up the measure of their comprehension and desires." For American authorities to support their cause, they must refer to later and more degenerate days. The name of Washington belongs not to the disciples of agitation. Could the lips of a patriotic king, or the pen of an upright statesman, who felt the people were much less interested in the contentions of party, than in the maintenance of order and good government, denounce in more

decided terms the system of factious agitation, than the following extract from *Columbia's Legacy ?*

"Towards the preservation of your government, and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite, not only that you speedily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts. One method of assault may be, to effect in the forms of the constitution, alterations, which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown. In all the changes to which you be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of governments, as of other human institutions; that experience is the surest standard, by which to test the real tendency of the existing constitution of a country; that facility in changes, upon the credit of mere hypothesis and opinion, exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion; and remember, especially, that for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours, a government of as much vigour as is consistent with the perfect security of liberty, is indispensable. Liberty itself will find in such a government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest guardian. It is, indeed, little else than a name, where the government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction, to confine each member of the society within the limits prescribed by the laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property."

Chapter VI.

THE ILLUMINISTS.

Reformers make nothing of old establishments, of interests that have taken root for ages, and of prejudices, habits, and relations, rather less ancient and rather more stubborn than they. It is fair and candid to make every presumption in favour of their intentions, that may not be discredited by their conduct. It is, however, an effort of candour; but we must make it, to allow that they have been carried away by systems, and the everlasting zeal to generalize, instead of proceeding, like men of practical sense, on the low but sure foundation of matter of fact. They often judge of a law, as they would of a picture, by the rules of taste: they can decide in such a case only as the mob do, by *acclamation*. What ought to be the result of experience, that a blockhead could both feel and express, is comprehended in the province of sentiment; and for the curse and confusion of a state, the plodding business of politics becomes one of the fine arts. The statesman is bewildered with his own peculiar fanaticism; he sees the stars near, but loses sight of the earth—he sails in his balloon into clouds and thick vapours, above his business and his duties, and if he sometimes catches a glimpse of the wide world, it seems flattened to a plain, and shrunk in all its proportions; therefore he strains his optics to look beyond its circumference, and contemplates invisibility till he thinks nothing else is real. New worlds of

metaphysics issue from his teeming brain, and whirl in orbits more elliptic than the comets. Man rises from the mire into which aristocracy has trodden him, shakes off the sleep of ignorance and the fetters of the law, a gorgeous new being, invested with perfectibility, a saint in purity, a giant in intellect, and goes to inhabit these worlds. Condorcet, and Roland, and men like them, will be there, and Paine, and Duane, and Marat, and Burroughs. There virtue will celebrate her triumphs; there patriotism will be inebriated with the ecstacy of her fellowships.

I know as little of the political illuminists as of the sect of the Swedenborgians; but to me it has ever appeared, that the former are a new sect of fanatics. They manifest a strange heat in the heart, but no light in the brain, unless it be a feeble light, whose rays are gathered in the lens of philosophy, to kindle every thing in the state, that is combustible, into a blaze. A statesman of this sect will poise himself in his chair, like an alchymist in his laboratory, pale with study, his fingers sooty with experiments, eager to make fuel of every thing that is precious, and sanguinely expecting that he shall extract every thing precious from the cinders and dross that must be thrown away.

In prosperous times, when men feel the greatest ardour in their pursuits of gain, they manifest the most callous apathy to politics. Those who possess nothing, and have nothing to do but to manage the intrigues of elections, will prevail against five times their number of men of business. Each description is actuated by strong passions, moving in different, but not opposite directions. When, however, some of the

great interests of society are invaded, those passions change their direction and are quickened in it. They are then capable of defending themselves with all the vivacity of the spirit of gain and of enterprise, with all the energies of vengeance and despair. These, it must be confessed, are revolutionary resources, for the defence of property and right, which cannot, and ought not, to be called forth on ordinary occasions. The classes in question will be long in danger, before they will be in fear; and, if their adversary forbears to push the attack in so rude a manner as to make that fear overpower all other emotions, he may proceed, unsuspected and unopposed. They will be as much engrossed with their business, as the political projectors with their plans of reforming, till they destroy it.

Those who possess property, who enjoy rights, and who reverence the laws, as the guardians of both, naturally think it important, and what is better, feel the necessity of supporting the controlling and restraining power of the state: in other words, their interests and wishes are on the side of *justice*, because justice will secure to every man his own. On the other hand, those who do not know what right is, or if they do, despise it; who have no interest in justice, because they have little for it to secure, and that little, perhaps, its impartial severity would transfer to creditors; who see in the mild aspect of our government, a despot's frown, and a dagger in its hand, while it scatters blessings; who consider government as an impediment to liberty, and the stronger the government, the stronger the impediment; that it is patriotism, virtue, heroism, to sur-

mount it; that liberty is to be desired for its abstract excellence, rather than its practical benefits, and, therefore, that it is better to run the hazard of the greatest possible degree of a perishable liberty, rather than to accept it with those guards and defences, which, to insane theorists, seem to make it less, but which, on the just analogies of experience, promise to make it immortal; those, in a word, who look on government with fear and aversion, on the relaxation or subversion of it, with complacency and hope; all who from credulity, envy, anger, and pride, from ambition or cupidity, are impatient under the restraints, or eager for the trappings of power.

All such reason, when they can, and act, and feel in a manner unfavourable to the support of the constitution and laws. Their opinions and creeds are various, and many of them are plausible, and seem to be moderate. It is probable they would all, except the leaders, at present incline to stop short of the extremes, to which the first steps are not perceived to tend, but which, when they are taken, are inevitable. They are impelled by a common instinct, as blind as it is steady and powerful in its action.

The democrats really wish to see an impossible experiment fairly tried, and to govern without government. There is universally, a presumption in democracy that promises every thing; and, at the same time, an imbecility that can accomplish nothing, nor even preserve itself.

Chapter VII.

POLITICAL INFLUENCE.

Of all men I have ever known, the jacobins have the worst opinion of human nature. An honest discharge of duty in any station, is a thing incredible, because with them it is incomprehensible. Accordingly, they begin with accusations and calumnies of the foulest sort, and call upon us to show that they are not true; as if the burden of truth did not rest on the accusers, but the accused.

It is proper to remark to the men who are observers of human nature, that of all kinds of influence the first for ignorant and vulgar minds to suspect, is downright bribery and corruption; it is, nevertheless, the last for even the profligate and shameless to yield to. It is so coarse an instrument, that it seldom answers the purpose. There are instances, and one is said to have happened during our revolution, where a man, who wanted integrity, made an outcry, when he had it in his power to brag that it had been tempted. More than half the indictments for rapes, are founded on the charges of women of no virtue. There is so much shame in yielding to the offer of a bribe, and so much glory in refusing it, that the latter is often the better and more tempting bribe, which determines the conduct.

Sir Robert Walpole, the celebrated English minister, is said to have been a master in the art of corruption; but when public opinion was decided strongly for or

against a measure, as in the cases of the Excise, the Jew-bill, if I mistake not, and the cruelties of the Spanish Guarda-costas, his gold and his art failed to secure a majority in parliament. In the attempt to *unite* Great Britain and Ireland, the project, in spite of ministerial influence, was at first rejected by the Irish commons. The public reasons were strong, the public good plainly called for the *union;* yet passion and prejudice opposed the measure. Ireland, by the union, seemed to be lost and swallowed up; and this secret dread, this inward horror, of sinking into nothing, outweighed all the forcible national arguments in favour of the measure. It may be added, that the members felt a like decline of their own weight and influence. It may, therefore, be said, with Sir Robert Walpole, that it is hard to bribe members even to do their duty, and to vote according to their consciences: much less can they be bribed to vote against them, or rather against the known voice of the nation.

All experience shows, that to get a bad measure adopted, when it is popular, is easy; to get a good one is very hard, against the current of even the most absurd and groundless popular clamour. The side, therefore, to look for corrupt influence, is ever the popular side, because that is the unsuspected, and yet the dark side: members, in that case, can be praised for acting *against* duty. As many are willing to yield their principles, who cannot part with their reputation, the occasions are frequent when members prefer acting so as to please the people instead of serving them.

Democracy, by indulging the fervours of the popular

spirit, is more disposed to imbibe a zeal for proselytism. The everlasting bustle of our elections, the endless disputations and harangues of demagogues, keep our spirits half the time smoking and ready to kindle, and the other half in a blaze. Zeal is ever contagious, and, accordingly, the only political propagandists now in the world are the democrats. The monarchists have less to do in the concerns of their government, and talk and wrangle less about it. The spirit of subordination they have; that of proselytism they have not. When life, liberty, and property are protected, they are contented, although their system should appear to speculatists inferior in its theory to the best of all possible governments.

Chapter VIII.

THE NEW ROMANS.

To raise curiosity, wonder, and terror, is the ordinary effect of great political events. All these, but especially wonder, have been produced by the progress of the French revolution. To wonder, is not the way to grow wise: to extract wisdom from experience, we must ponder and examine; we must search for the *plan* which regulates political conduct, and its ultimate *design*. To know *what* is done, without knowing *why* it is done, and with what *spirit* it was undertaken, is knowing nothing: it is no better than laborious ignorance and studious error. Such has been the crude mass of newspaper information, the blind and undistinguishing admiration of French victories. It would be difficult to understand all that it is profitable to know, in regard to these surprising events, if history did not teach us, that like actors and like scenes have been exhibited in ancient days, and that we may, if we will, learn wisdom from the sad experience of the nations which have gone before us.

Since the Romans, no nation has appeared on the stage of human affairs, with a character completely military, except the French; and that character was mingled with the commercial, until the revolution.

With less than half a million of citizens in her whole territory, according to the census or enumeration preserved by Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Rome, soon

after the expulsion of her kings, was ready to commence the conquest of Italy, a country scarcely less populous than France. It was, however, divided into petty states, many of which were as numerous, as brave, and as warlike as the Romans; but there was an immense difference in their national character and maxims of state. The citizens of Rome were all soldiers; they had no pay; all that rewarded their toils in war was pillage. Poor as they were, and bands of robbers are ever poor, the spoils of an enemy's camp, or the division of conquered lands, was ample reward for a fortnight's campaign. Their enemies were near at hand, and ever ready for combat: of course, the term of service was short, but the calls for it were frequent. In Rome, therefore, there was but one trade, and that was war: all were soldiers. Accordingly, Rome could array sixty thousand of the firmest infantry in the world, while she had not five hundred thousand citizens; a province in Italy, with a million, did not offer to resist one demi-brigade of French soldiers. What a prodigious difference!

One-eighth of the population of Rome were soldiers, the best in the world. France is exceedingly populous, and cannot need, if she could bear, as great a draft from her numbers as Rome; no modern nation has, however, come so near being like the Romans, all soldiers, as the French. It is exceedingly difficult to state the proportion of soldiers to other citizens. It has generally been thought, that Germany had soldiers in the proportion of one to a hundred. The distresses of Austria, and the zeal of the Hungarians may have doubled the proportion, during the most trying periods of the war with France. There is, however,

reason to believe, that, in the energies of Robespierreism, France, with her sixteen armies, arrayed, within and without her territory, nearly *one-twelfth* of her vast population. Without a merchant-ship, her navy hauled up, arts stagnant, capital spent, skill occupied in making arms, Lyons blown up with gunpowder, the only place to find business, to get bread, fame, and promotion, was in the army: no modern state has been so nearly all military. This was not the effect of her momentary distresses; it was the *plan* of her government, and a consequence of the character of her people. Her government, ever changing hands, was ever the same in spirit. Like Rome, who extended her conquests, while she was convulsed with civil war, every change has breathed new fury into the military enthusiasm of France. One passion, like a tyrant, has banished all others: it is the only one that has aliment, or finds scope for its exercise. We have seen how prevalent this passion is in every French bosom; for the emigrants who sought a foreign asylum, bespattered with the blood and brains of their fathers, and wives, and kindred, strutted on the news of their victories, as if they were an inch taller on the success of their oppressors; and they wept and mourned when their fleets or armies were beaten. In France, the age of chivalry is not gone: a spirit, more ardent than the crusades engendered, glows there, which burns not for liberty, but for conquest. The money-getting and money-loving Dutch and Americans, can scarcely credit the influence of this passion. Doubts of this sort are plausible errors: and they oppose metaphysics, as to what *ought* to govern men, to the confounding and decisive autho-

rity of experience, which determines what *does* govern men.

It might, if it were necessary, be shown, that the chivalry of the military spirit ever was predominant in that country: all that was respected was military. The lower classes were emulous of this spirit, and they allowed, that gentility consisted in bearing arms: the common soldiers fought duels, affected to be men of honour, and gloried in the distinction of wearing ragged uniform, and eating bad provisions, for the grand monarque. All this happened before the revolution. It might be added, that all trades, that merchandise, and a condition of labour, were ever held base and degrading. It happened that the merchants, to whom honour was not ascribed, wanted honour and integrity. They were brought down, as might naturally be expected, to the rank in which they were held. There was nothing that ought to rival the splendour of military distinction; there was nothing in the state that did rival it. All other passions were quenched; all the energies of the human character were concentred in the passion for arms. The revolution came, and sublimated all the passions to fury and extravagance: it gave an immediate preponderance, nay, a sole dominion, to the love of glory. The national guards were formed, and their epaulets and swords were worth more in their eyes than liberty.

The bloody struggle that buried arts, and institutions, and wealth, and thrones, and churches of God under heaps of cinders, gave that strength to this passion, which might be expected from partial indulgence and strict discipline.

Very early, the French perceived the affinity of

their national character with that of the Romans; though it is, manifestly, with the Romans after they were corrupted and had lost their liberty. Their vanity instantly prompted them to emulate this model; and, to illustrate this resemblance, they became vain of their consuls and tribunes, and adopted the haughty demeanour, as well as the insidious art of the Roman senate. If modern nations are any better than barbarians, they ought to mark the spirit of these new Romans, and exert, in self-defence, a spirit of intelligence and patriotism, which was wanting to the ancient world, and which might have saved them from bondage.

Conquest being the object of the Romans, and the spirit of the people being, in a high degree, martial, the next care was to train up men to be conquering soldiers. They believed that they could, and that they ought to achieve more than other soldiers; and, therefore, they cheerfully submitted to the augmentation of labour, and self-denial, and danger, that this pre-eminence of glory and courage were bound to sustain. Their patriotism was little less than self-love; they heard of nothing but what was due to their country; they lived, and acted, and were bound by oath, if necessary, to die for it. The republic was a sort of divinity, which commanded their reverence and affection, and which alone conferred the rewards that were proper for heroes. This sentiment was strengthened by the rigour of the maxims which then regulated war: to be conquered, or even to be a prisoner, was to be annihilated as a Roman, and for ever deprived of an inheritance of glory more precious than life.

Such was the force of this complex and skilful machinery, that the Roman soldiers were heroes: they were all that men could be. Their country was a camp; and peace, a time, not of rest, but of preparation and exercise. They were taught to carry vast burdens, to march loaded like packhorses, to take fifteen days' provisions, to transport weapons heavier than their enemies' intrenching-tools, and much of the equipage of war, which is now conveyed by thousands of wagons. This habitual endurance of hardship made it familiar, hardened them to the rigour of climates, and the most violent efforts: they were seldom sick. Their celerity in marching, their perfect discipline, their promptness to rally after a repulse, their unwearied perseverance in battle, were as extraordinary and as terrible to the foe, as their heroic courage. They claimed to be, and their enemies admitted that they were, a superior race of men. This lofty opinion realized itself: they did not rely on numbers, but thought it enough to send a popular general with two legions *(not sixteen thousand men)*, to overthrow the empires of Tigranes or Jugurtha: they expected, and experience justified their expectation, that the terror of the Roman name would be more effectual than legions. Accordingly, the subjects and allies, and even the children, of the invaded kings, seldom failed to desert his cause who was the enemy of Rome, and of course, devoted to ruin.

If this view of the military character of Rome has not led the mind of the reader to mark its resemblance with the French, it is not because the latter have omitted any means in their command to form themselves on the Roman model. As the French soldiers

compose a large part of the able-bodied citizens, they are a better sort of men than are found in the ranks of their enemies: the French soldiers are really Frenchmen, and animated with a large portion of that fiery, impetuous zeal for the glory of the nation, which is so remarkably characteristic. It is a subject, on which no Frenchman, however his country may have misused him, can be cold. All that taxes, that confiscation, or that foreign spoil could supply, has been promised as a reward; and all that art or eloquence could do, has been used as incitement. In France, too, as in Rome, there is no claim of power and distinction, but what is derived from the sword: the consuls were generals, and all the offices were considered as in a degree military: no man can be great in France unless he is a great general. The Abbé Sièyes was made a consul, and, for wisdom in the cabinet, report assigned him the first place: when Caligula made his horse a consul, he did not make him as able and learned as Sièyes, but he invested him with the exact measure of power that Buonaparte allowed to his colleague. The army, conscious of being the fountain of power, would as soon submit to the authority of a woman, as of any man eminent in any other art than the military, and ignorant of *that*. When, therefore, all glory, all distinction in the state, and the exclusive title to a share in the government of it, are confined to the military, no wonder that art has been carried to a degree of perfection far beyond the attainments of the rival States.

If those States were equally emulous of glory, if their subjects were all soldiers, and if all arts were held in contempt that were not subservient to arms,

they would be on a footing with the French. But, since the discovery of America, the systems of all the European governments have been commercial: they have patronised the arts that would procure riches, as preferable to those which confer power. The public sentiment of every other nation has been rather that of avarice than of ambition. The military profession has been, in consequence, separated from every other, and, in some measure, degraded in estimation, as the only one that earns nothing, and that is corrupted by idleness. The rest of the society has become unwarlike, unfit for toil, insensible to glory. The citizen, attached to his ease, his property and family, considers it as both ruin and disgrace to become a soldier. Is it strange, then, that the entire mass of France should overpower its enemies?

France, subject to the most energetic despotism in the world, poured forth her myriads in arms. Formerly, a few strong fortresses, or a ridge of mountains, were called barriers; and to subdue a country these obstacles must be overcome: many campaigns were made by the famous Marlborough to break the line of the iron frontier of France, as the Netherlands have been called. The French have changed this system of war in a very extraordinary manner. By the immensity of the mass of their armies, by their great extent, occupying the whole frontier of an enemy's country, by the astonishingly numerous artillery, the rapid marches, the attacks made in concert in many places at once, from the Lower Rhine to the Mincio and Adige, though at the distance of one hundred and fifty leagues, by the unwearied renewal of those attacks, if the first fails, and by the endless reinforce-

ments of fresh troops, a State is now subdued, as soon as, formerly, Marlborough could take a town: the field of battle extends over several provinces: the map of a country is not extensive enough for the plan of a camp: all the heights and commanding positions are occupied in such a manner, that the two wings of the army are, perhaps, one hundred and fifty miles apart: if one of the enemy's posts can be passed by, or his forces are dislodged from them, he must fall back to take the next best position in his rear, and thus a country falls in a day, and, perhaps, without a battle.

It is evident, that this new method of employing so vast armies, and this wasteful activity of manœuvring and fighting incessantly, by which a campaign has become unusually destructive of human life, will require Europe to be more military than ever; all must be soldiers, or all will be slaves: and this boasted and boastful revolution will tend to hasten, and to fix for ages, both barbarism and despotism.

Art cannot soon form the character of a nation, nor can violence soon change it. Of all the barbarous nations, the Franks were the most martial. Fourteen hundred years ago, they formed their petty tribes into a conquering nation. The greatness of the nation early inspired ambition, which several able and warlike princes inflamed into a national enthusiasm. While most other European States were feeble by their divisions, the French were powerful, and aspired to dominion and influence over other nations. More than a thousand years ago, their kings led armies into Italy, and parcelled out its governments, as Buonaparte did of late. The splendour of the reign of Charlemagne fascinated the French as much as

their late victories, and established the pretensions of their vanity to be the *great* nation, the arbiters of Europe. The compactness as well as immensity of their force, engaged them in every war that occurred. We know the power that habit has to form the characters of individual men and whole nations: by continual wars, the French lost nothing of the military spirit of their barbarous ancestors. The crusades and the age of chivalry exalted this spirit to its highest degree, and greatly distinguished the French among the crusaders. The Edwards, and still more Henry the Seventh, of England, and afterwards the wise Elizabeth, introduced commerce and the arts, and gave a new turn to the enterprise of the English nation. It may be conjectured, with some appearance of probability, that the insular position of England very early determined the English character towards the arts of peace. As soon as the struggles between the King and the Barons, and the rival Houses of York and Lancaster, afforded any respite from arms, and any interior order in the kingdom, two consequences resulted: a greater portion of the English inhabited the country, the country being as safe to inhabit as the cities: the yeomanry, or cultivators of land, increased in wealth and influence in the State, and constituted the mass and body of the nation: husbandry forms a class of men, and a determined character for the class, very unlike that of soldiers. A second consequence, and connected with the former, was, that the English were afterwards engaged less actively, and, indeed, less dangerously, in wars than their rivals: except the incursions of the Scotch, their wars were abroad, they were only occasional and of short duration. When

the reign of Henry the Seventh, and the discovery of America, awakened the ardour of discovery and commercial enterprise, this new propensity found little rivalship or impediment from the military passion, and, as it was fostered afterwards by Elizabeth and the Stuarts, the English soon became a shopkeeping nation, *une nation boutiquière*, as the French contemptuously denominate them. Hence the passion to acquire is characteristic of the English; the passion to rule is predominant with the French: the one seeks gain: the other glory.

The causes which have led to this national character, not only lie deep in the most remote antiquity, but events of a more recent date have contributed to decide and for ever to fix their preponderance.

The ravages of national wars frequently exposed the country-people to spoil and violence; but the great lords and feudal chiefs claimed and exercised the right of private vengeance. Hence, animosities and endless civil wars desolated the continental states of Europe. The only places of security were the fortified towns. Thus it happened, that the country was inhabited by a wretched, defenceless peasantry, without character or spirit, and subject to the *corvée* or ruinous slavery of performing certain labour for their lords, and to a whole system of feudal exactions and oppressions, so heavy and so dispiriting, as to prevent them having any character of their own, or any influence on that of the nation. Indeed, emulation will be directed towards such qualities as are esteemed; and there was nothing in the condition of the labouring class to gratify pride or to inspire it. The soldiers only were respected or imitated: they gave the tone and

the fashion to every thing in France. Cities were not much occupied in arts, and not at all in commerce. They were crowded with retainers to princes and nobles, who even wore their livery and fed at their tables: they followed them in war, and their multitude was the rule by which the magnificence and power of the nobles was measured and displayed.

Thus the taste and manners of the French were not formed, like those of the English, in solitude and by the occupations of country life. Fashion governed the crowds in cities, and the nobles and their martial followers alone gave law to fashion: arms engrossed all thoughts, the business of war and the conversation of peace.

When Louis the Eleventh humbled the great lords of France, and established a standing army, his sagacity discerned that this leading propensity of the French character was to be used as the instrument to keep the nation in subjection. His successors cherished the military sense of honour, as the basis and guardian principle of the monarchy. The *noblesse* despised trade, and an artisan, however ingenious, was one of the *peuple*, or populace, or mob.

From hence it followed, that arms alone were honoured: a rich man could not pretend to be a gentleman till he had served a campaign; and the French noblesse preserved undiminished, the gallantry, the impetuous valour that courted danger, which so much distinguished the age of the crusades and of chivalry: that gallant race was extinct, excepting in France.

The revolution began, and was in a great measure effected, not by quenching this chivalrous spirit, but by awakening it in the rabble. They were sensible

to honour and shame, and they claimed to be as brave, and, therefore, as much gentlemen as the noblesse.

This emulation, the more lively for being newly inspired, animated the attack of the Bastille, arrayed the national guards, and spread the power of enthusiasm, like the electric fluid, over all France. The leaders of the revolution, as skilful to guide as to excite the popular ferment, availed themselves of these new energies to raise armies, and, after having subverted the monarchy, to find work for them in a war with Austria. The progress of this war, it was foreseen, would throw all the political and physical power of France into their hands, as the fervour of the revolution had already given them absolute power over opinion. Never, in the history of mankind, did the rulers of a nation possess an influence so combined and so unlimited. Robespierre held all France in his hand as a machine, he wielded it as a weapon, while the emperor and the king of Great Britain, whom the French call despots, could command only the surplus of the revenues, and some fragments of the force of their states.

But the manner in which this gigantic despotism has proceeded, will best illustrate the popular sentiment, from which it sprung, and the end which alone it deems worthy of its ambition and its efforts.

Savages take their character from their situation as *individuals*, from their appetites and their wants, rather than from any sympathy of national sentiment: hunger makes them hunters; fear, and sometimes, revenge, makes them warriors. But in polished societies, men derive their national cast from their intercourse with one another. Absolute want is felt

by few, and those who feel it, are without influence on the society. Man ceases to be merely an individual; he models his desires and his sentiments according to his relation to the national body of which he is a member. That class in society which is the most respected, is the most imitated. It has been shown, that the class of artisans, or that of merchants, did *not* hold that envied place in France, but that the men of the sword *did*.

This being the national sentiment, it is obvious, that the government could not disobey, much less offend or shock, that sentiment, without losing, in a moment, all its hold on the popular affections. A dastardly policy, a dread of war with Austria or England, would have blasted the new leaders with disgrace. Taken, as they were, from the lowest classes of the nation, they would have been charged with having souls as mean as their condition, too mean to govern a republic, all whose citizens claimed an equal rank with their high-spirited nobles, and who required, that the great nation should adopt the lofty pretensions, and display the impetuous courage, of its military class. All the classes of society claimed an equality, and to be at the top, and thus the depression of ranks instantly produced an elevation of national spirit. Believing that they were all sovereign, and that France, by raising its spirit, had raised its power, they were anxious to make such a display of it, as should astonish and confound kings, whom they hated, and the English nation, whom they envied and feared. They considered their new liberty as a new rank, and the highest rank, which, of course, in their eyes, was military; and that this sudden dignity was neither

solidly established, nor sufficiently enjoyed, unless the *power* of France was displayed in a manner to excite both terror and wonder, to make kings quake, and their subjects admire. How dear a triumph for republicanism! How lofty a stage for equality!

Indeed it is not in the nature of things, that any strong popular impulse should be satisfied without action. The more sudden, surprising, and violent the action, the more likely is it to gratify and prolong this impulse. All democracies are governments by popular passions. These cannot exist and be at rest; they cannot be indulged, and yet kept within the limits of moderation or principle. They sweep like whirlwinds, that are not stopped by desolation, but as they destroy, they level obstacles and are quickened in their progress. They pour like torrents from the mountains, and, if they reach the plains in their fulness, they are inundations unconfined by banks: the violence of each soon scoops for itself a narrow channel, and that is a dry one.

One auxiliary cause of the military passion of the French has not been mentioned in its proper place; it must not be omitted in the examination of characters. The English, their great rivals, ever thought themselves entitled to take rank as a *free* nation. The French could not vie with the English for *liberty;* but vanity, repelled from one course, sought and found relief in another: we are the most gallant people of Europe: these islanders, proud of their liberty, shall not be permitted to despise, they shall fear us. Pride, hot in the race of emulation, and smarting with the wound of its imputed degradation by slavery under an absolute monarch, grew prouder, when it wore its

armour and surveyed its trophies. In that contemplation, every Frenchman stretched into a giant, and felt persuaded, that France alone was peopled by the race of Anak.

All this military fervour, with all its strength and all its blindness, was transferred by the revolution into the people, *la Bourgeoisie*, who claimed to be nobles, and who knew no other way to display it, than the usual and acknowledged one for men of rank, by military distinction.

Accordingly, in the first era of the revolution, the formation of the *national guards*, and the establishment of rank equal to veterans, awakened the sleeping pride of every heart, and mingled the love of liberty with self-love, too intimately to allow them afterwards to be dissociated. Pride received a new impulse to its current, but it ran in the old channel.

No sooner had the revolution attracted attention, than each Frenchman felt his individual title to pre-eminence, as well as that of the nation, to be subjected to a trial. He now claimed to be freer than the free, to be freer than an Englishman or American, as he had ever pretended to be the first among polished and brave men. Their common sentiment was, of course, that the friendship of those who resembled them in liberty was *a debt;* the submission of those who were inferior to them in force or courage, was *a decree of fate.* The supposed hatred of kings, because *they* had made a republic, their contempt, because they had made a vile rabble rulers, alike stimulated their national vanity to assert claims that were thus disputed, and, if possible, to make them indisputable. They perceived, that France was a stage, and that the curiosity

of mankind expected something magnificent in the scenes, something preternatural in the actors, something that would dazzle and astonish; that would make criticism distrustful of its rules, and awe contradiction into silence.

The revolution itself was one of those portentous, but rare events, which originate from the operation of moral causes, from the intestine agitation of the human mind; a fermentative power, that destroys the forms and the essences of the political body, and yet in its progress separates a larger portion of that pungent spirit, that was formerly the hidden aliment of its life, and is now its preservative from corruption. But, while all France was steaming with this pervading heat, and twitching with the spasms of enthusiastic passion, its popular leaders, assuming imposing names, and exercising a despotism that had neither known limits nor definition, suddenly found themselves invested with a power that seemed miraculous. They could lead the nation out like an intoxicated giant, or like a war-elephant, to tread down an enemy's ranks, and train him rather to be furious, than intimidated, by his wounds.

The spirit of the revolution, like that of the crusades, is a fierce and troubled spirit: and, like that, it may take two centuries to quiet it. It is a prodigious power, which the monarchy could not resist; but which the chiefs of the military democracy have successively attempted to guide.

It may seem to most readers a paradox, that so much weight should be allowed to the popular sentiment, in a country so despotic as France. It should

be remembered, that even a despotism has but a limited physical strength; it must depend on other props than mere force; it must make an auxiliary of public opinion. The grand Seignior governs Turkey by the aid of superstition, more than by his janissaries; and, even in France, where the people seem to be annihilated, and are nothing in the subordinate plans of the government, the great objects of policy must be chosen, and conducted, with no small condescension to their wishes. The claims of their vanity have been exorbitant from the first, and every new set of tyrants has promised still further to exalt that vanity. Indeed they have kept their word!

It is probable, that sensible Frenchmen have long ago discerned, that they did not possess liberty, and that they were not in the road to attain it; but they appeared to be in that road, and that illusion concealed their chains and soothed their sense of disappointment. They could bear it, that they were not freemen, it was what they were used and reconciled to; but they would not bear not to be conquerors. Their love of liberty was tractable; their vanity untractable. Accordingly, they gloried in the enthusiasm of their efforts to expel those, who, by invading, had *profaned* the territory of the republic; although no tyranny could be more odious or sanguinary than that for which they fought. They have borne taxes, paper-money, famine, tyranny in all its worst forms, not merely with ordinary patience, but with alacrity, because the French nation struck Europe with admiration and terror. While religion and morals took flight, industry starved, and innocence bled, national

vanity had its banquets: its frequent feasts became its ordinary living, and it would have pined without a profusion of dainties.

Amidst all the confusion of the changes in the government of France, the rulers have formed their policy on the basis of the vanity of the nation: every new set has promised aggrandizement and glory to France, and the infliction of a signal vengeance on its enemies.

This constancy in adhering to the same maxims of policy, while the men at the head of affairs were kings only for three months, may seem surprising. But Sparta preserved nearly the same character seven hundred years, though many violent revolutions occurred; and Rome acted as long, and even more uniformly, on the strength of the national sentiment, that she could not exist at all, unless as a conqueror and mistress of the world; yet Rome changed her consuls yearly. The diversity of the character of her magistrates was lost in the uniformity and force of her own.

In the very beginning of the French popular government, the national vanity was soothed by the incense of flattery from its own demagogues, and the natural jacobins of every civilized state. Addresses from clubs, and from individual incendiaries, were multiplied, and graciously received at the bar of the convention. It seemed to be a Roman senate, sitting judicially to hear the grievances of all nations, and to parcel out the world into provinces. Anacharsis Cloots appeared, and harangued the assembly, as the orator of the human race. In November, 1792, the safety and independence of all states was formally attacked by the decree, that France would assist the

rebels of all countries against their governments. The apologists for French extravagances, after some fruitless attempts to justify the principle of this outrage on all mankind, have next endeavoured to palliate: they say, less was intended than the words of the decree seem to import. When the conduct of France discredited even this palliation, it has been since insisted, that the decree was adopted in times of violence and confusion, and that it has been formally annulled. All periods have been violent, and marked with a more than Roman contempt of the rights, as well as the opinions of mankind. But Gregoire, in his laboured report to the assembly on the laws of nations, in which this monstrous decree is supposed to be annulled, expressly says, that the application of the principles he had exhibited, is the right only of the nations, whose governments are founded on the rights of man. The best proof, however, that France has not, in form, renounced the decree, is, that she has invariably adhered to it in fact.

It appears by the publications of Brissot and others, that the French rulers, like the Roman senate, believed it to be necessary rather to employ the fiery turbulent spirit of the nation in war abroad, than to let it employ itself in sedition at home. It is a general opinion among the democrats of all countries, that France was attacked by a royal coalition, jealous of her republicanism. The fact is, the French began the war in Flanders against the emperor, when his towns were without garrisons, the fortifications had been recently pulled down, and the troops ordinarily kept on foot, for their defence, did not amount to half their complement.

With such a spirit as raged in France, and with such interests and means to turn the fury of the popular passions against the emperor and the king of England, peace was not to be maintained. When a whole street is on fire, can a man sit at his ease, and say, My house is of brick, let my next neighbour burn; the fire will burn out, and then the bustle and danger will be over? Such are the speeches made, and with great popular effect, to inflame the admirers of democracy with a zeal for injured, invaded France.

. . . . . Jam proximus ardet
Ucalegon.

The conflagration of every thing combustible in France rendered it impossible for other powers to be at peace; and as France will not and cannot change her political character, Europe will not be permitted long to enjoy it. So vast a power is a continual incentive to ambition; and such a national military spirit naturally leads to power. There are many states in Europe still, that might tempt a conqueror; there is not one, except Great Britain, that has the spirit and means to resist him.

It has been already shown, that the only prevailing popular sentiment was the military one. The excess of that passion has enabled the government to maintain tranquillity as profound, as if there was no war. The French saw tyranny in Paris, oppression in the provinces; all commerce, all credit, all manufacture was ruined; but as an offset for want, slavery, and ruin, there was victory, and all France shouted for joy.

The manner in which this Roman power has been used, is truly Roman. The neighbouring states have

been made, not merely the objects of conquest, but the instruments of ambition, to effect more conquests

It was in like manner the policy of Rome, to make use of her feeble enemies to destroy such as were strong. The Ætolians in Greece were first engaged to assist in destroying Philip of Macedon. They, finding themselves duped and enslaved by the Romans, called in Antiochus, king of Syria, to assist them in their defence. The cities of Greece were gained, and dexterously played off to destroy the liberties of Greece. While Rome and Carthage were contending, the great powers, still unconquered, took no part in the contest. Thus Rome not only attacked them one after another, but was always sure to have the assistance of an old enemy, whom she had just conquered into an alliance, to overpower a new one. Hannibal, after his defeat, fled to Antiochus: it was then too late, for Carthage had received the law of the conqueror. Antiochus interfered in the affairs of Greece, after Philip of Macedon was humbled, and forced to be the ally of Rome against him. Mithridates, king of Pontus, had no ally till his power was much enfeebled; —then Tigranes joined him in time to be defeated. Greece would have been strong if it had been united; but its numerous governments were jealous of one another, often at war, and ready to call in the Romans to enslave them all. It seems astonishing, that neither Macedon, nor Greece, nor Syria, nor Egypt, made treaties of mutual defence, or took any sensible measure to employ all their joint forces in self-preservation. The world would have been saved from slavery.

There is scarcely a single article of Roman policy,

in which we do not perceive the servile imitation of the French; and if Great Britain was a republic, as Carthage was, there would be a faction in its bosom, devoted to France, strong enough to ensure her slavery. The fall of Great Britain would quench every hope of the recovery of the independence of Europe: a new Roman servitude would spread over the civilized world. The United States would be exposed to new toils, conflicts and dangers: faction would raise her snaky head with new audacity, confiding in the support that France would give to her efforts. We might be alarmed in time to see the approach of a foreign tyrant; but we should have to fight for our independence, or to resign it.

Chapter IX.

THE RESOURCES OF A FREE AND STABLE GOVERNMENT, CONTRASTED WITH THOSE OF A REVOLUTIONARY GOVERNMENT.

In France, we behold the effects of trying by the test of experience the most plausible metaphysical principles, in appearance the most pure, yet the most surprisingly in contrast with the corruption of the national manners. Theories, fit for angels, have been adopted for the use of a multitude, who have been found, when left to what is called their self-government, unfit to be called men. By stamping the rights of man on pocket handkerchiefs, it was supposed they were understood by those who understand nothing; and by voting them through the convention, it would cost a man his life and estate to say, that they were not established.

On grounds *so solid* Condorcet could proclaim to the enlightened, the fish-women, and the mob of the suburbs of St. Antoine, all disciples of "the new school of philosophy," that France had improved on all known plans of government, and that her liberty was immortal.

Experience has shown, and it ought to be of all teaching the most profitable, that any government by mere popular impulses, any plan that *excites*, instead of restraining, the passions of the multitude, is a despotism: it is not, even in its beginning, much less in its progress, nor in its issue and effects, *liberty*. As

well might we suppose, that the assassin's dagger conveys a restorative balsam to the heart, when it stabs it; or that the rottenness and dry bones of the grave will spring up again, in this life, endued with imperishable vigour, and the perfection of angels. To cure expectations, at once so foolish and so sanguine, what can be more rational than to inspect sometimes the sepulchre of French liberty? The body is not deposited there, for indeed it never existed; but much instruction is to be gained by carefully considering the lying vanity of its epitaph.

The great contest between England and France, also, shows the stability aud the resources of free governments, and the precariousness and wide-spreading ruin of the resort to revolutionary means.

Great Britain and France are the primary nations; it is evident, that all the rest play a subordinate and secondary part. The French adopt this opinion, and call France, Rome, and Great Britain, Carthage. If this similitude were exact, Britain would sink in the contest. But the British Government is more stable than that of Carthage; and, therefore, faction is a little less virulent, and a great deal less powerful. Besides, the British superiority on the seas is more clearly, as well as more durably established, and more effectively displayed, than that of Carthage. The naval art was rude and imperfect in ancient times; and those, who then understood it best, were little the better for that advantage. Duillius, the Roman consul, gained a naval victory with mere landsmen. The reason was, that the ships of war were rowed alongside their antagonists, and being grappled firmly together, the combat was maintained, as in fights on land, by

a body of soldiers on each side. This being the ordinary event of a sea-fight, no wonder the Roman soldiers, whose valour was the steadiest and the best trained in the world, prevailed over the mercenaries of Carthage. Every thing is different between England and France. So superior are the English seamen to the French, so little now depends on the number of men, and so much upon naval art, that the crowd of Frenchmen on board their vessels are rather an incumbrance than an effective force. There is seldom a sea-fight, in which the French escape, although their crews are far more numerous than those of their conquerors. Great Britain, too, enjoys a *durable* superiority. There must be commerce, before there will be seamen; there must be a stable government, before there will be a general spirit of enterprise and industry to create commerce. The hands of labour will be weak, while its earnings are exposed to rapine, as in France. It will be an age or two, before that nation will get rid of her military tyrants and her revolutionary spirit; and, till she does, her prosperity will be precarious, and her naval power will be displayed, like that of Turkey, by forcing awkward landmen on board ships. Despotism will waste men and wealth, and in vain, to imitate the spontaneous energies of industry and commerce, fostered by a free and stable government. It may be added, that a naval power is exerted with infinitely more effect now, than it was in ancient times: every nation almost is now vulnerable in its commerce and in its colonies; the ruin of these produces a decay of the revenues and resources for war.

If, then, France affects to be Rome, she will not find

in Great Britain a Carthage. In the military spirit of her people, Britain, has not been found inferior to her boastful antagonist. Carthage, on the contrary, was too much torn by factions to maintain a good infantry of her own citizens: she hired strangers. But her cavalry, as that was not a despised service, like the infantry, but attended with honour, was excellent, and so superior to that of Rome, that the Numidian horse, under Hannibal, won every battle in the open plains.

Carthage was rich, and England is richer; Carthage was called free, England is really so; and if the government of Great Britain were either a democracy or a despotism, in would have been shivered to pieces, in the former case, by faction, and in the latter by France, within the first four years of the war. None but free governments are stable; and none that are purely democratic are free.

In point of resources, it does not appear that Britain experiences any want. France is more nearly beggared by revolution, and Spain by the pride and laziness of her people, than Great Britain is by war. It is a great evil to a nation to be obliged to exert all its energies to preserve itself from French fraternity; but it would be an evil a hundred times greater to fall under it.

France has used, from the first, *revolutionary* means, in other words, all that violence could procure. While England, with difficulty, taxed *income*, her rival could, by a decree, seize the *capital;* and after it had been sold to revolutionary buyers, the next men in power could decree, that these were royalists, and seize it a second time: every change brought the

whole stock to the new mint. One would expect, that France was of all nations the richest in resources: since it could spend all, and then attack the new holders of property, and spend it as often as the necessities of *liberty* might require. By a formal decree, all property in France was declared in *a state of requisition.* The whole people were enrolled and *in requisition*; and death, or confiscation of the offender's property, ensued on disobedience. Never did Eastern despotism claim more tremendous power, or actually exercise so much. Yet violence is ever a temporary resource: it is a fire, whose splendour is brilliant ruin.

Chapter X.

AN APPEAL TO PATRIOTISM, AGAINST THE DESIGNS OF THE DESTRUCTIVES.

Many persons seem to despair of the commonwealth. They say, it is evident, a violent jacobin administration is begun. The address to the popular passions, they argue, is generally successful; and always very encouragingly rejected, even when it is not. While the friends of order rely on the *sense* of the people, the jacobins appeal to their nonsense with infinite advantage: they affect to be entirely on *the people's* side; and their mistake, if, by great good luck, it is supposed they err, is ascribed to a good motive, in a manner and spirit that invites fresh attempts to deceive. Thus the deceivers of the people *tire out* their adversaries; they try again and again: and an attempt that is never abandoned, at last will not fail. What then, it is asked, can be done? We have an enlightened people, who are not poor, and, therefore, are interested to keep jacobinism down, which ever seeks plunder as the end, and confusion as the means. Yet the best informed of this mighty people are lazy, or ambitious, and go over to the cause of confusion; or are artfully rendered unpopular, because they will not go over to it. The sense, and virtue, and property of the nation, therefore, will not govern it; but every day shows, that its vice, and poverty, and ambition will.

We have been mistaken. In our affairs, we have

only thought of what was to be hindered, and provided sufficiently for nothing that was to be done. We have thought that virtue, with so many bright rewards, had some solid power; and that, with ten thousand charms, she could always command a hundred thousand votes. Alas! these illusions are as thin as the gloss on other bubbles. Politicians have supposed, that man really is what he should be; that his reason will do all it can, and his passions and prejudice no more than they ought; whereas his reason is a mere looker-on; it is moderation, when it should be zeal; is often corrupted to vindicate, where it should condemn; and is a coward or a trimmer, that will take hush-money. Popular reason does not always know how to act right, nor does it always act right, when it knows. The agents that move politics, are the popular passions; and those are ever, from the very nature of things, under the command of the disturbers of society. Those who would defend order, and property, and right, the real friends of law and liberty, have a great deal to say to silence passion, but nothing to offer that will satisfy it; nothing that will convince a sans-culotte that his ignorance, or vice, and laziness, ordain that he should be poor, while a demagogue tells him, it is the funding system that makes him poor, and *revolution* shall make him rich. Few can reason, all can feel; and such an argument is gained, as soon as it is proposed. While, then, the popular passions are sure to govern, and the reason of the society is sure to be awed into silence, or to be disregarded, if it is heard, what hope is there that our course will not be as headlong, as rapid, and as fatal, as that of all governments by mere

popular impulse has ever been? The turnpike road of history is white with their tombstones.

If our government must fall, as it *may* very deplorably, and soon, and as it certainly *must* with a violent jacobin administration, let the monstrous wickedness of working its downfal really be, and *appear*, if possible, to the whole people to be chargeable to the jacobins. Let the lovers of the constitution cling to it, while it has life in it, and even longer than there is hope. Let them be auxiliary to its virtues; let them contend for its corpse, as for the body of Patroclus; and let them reverence its memory. Let them delay, if they cannot prevent its fate. Despair not only hastens the evil, but renders any remedy unavailing. Time, that soothes all other sufferings, will bring no relief to us, if we neglect or throw away the means in our hands. What are they? Truth and argument. They are feeble means, feeble indeed, against prejudice and passion; yet they are all we have, and we must try them. They will be jury-masts, if we are shipwrecked.

The managers of the *plan* of confusion, are not numerous; for that reason, they are the better united. They are a desperate gang. No men on earth more despise democracy; or are more overbearing in their dispositions; or form vaster plans of personal aggrandizement. Yet, as they have need of the *democrats*, who are more numerous, are honester, and more in credit than the *jacobins*, they are obliged to make use of them. They flatter and deceive, and will surely betray them, as Cromwell and the independents did the presbyterians.

The question, therefore, seems to be, how far we shall probably travel in the revolutionary road; and whether there is any stopping-place, any hope of taking breath, as we run towards the bottomless pit, into which the revolutionary fury is prone to descend. Our assailants are weaker, and our means of defence greater, than the first patriots of France possessed; our good men, instead of running away, like the French emigrants, and giving up their estates to confiscation, must stay at home, and exert their talents and influence to save the country. Events may happen to baffle the schemes of jacobinism; and if the country should not be sleepy or infatuated, of which there is, unhappily, great danger, our adversaries will never be able to push the work of mischief to its consummation.

Chapter XI.

A VOICE OF WARNING.

Accident may give rise and extent to states, but the fixed laws that govern human actions and passions will decide their progress and fate. By looking into history, and seeing what has been, we know what will be. It is thus that dumb experience speaks audibly; it is thus that witnesses come from the dead and testify. Are we warned? No. Are we roused? No. We lie in a more death-like sleep than those witnesses.

The plebeians of Rome asserted their right to serve in the highest offices, and at length obtained it; but the people still chose the *most able* and *eminent men*, who were patricians, and rejected their *worthless tribunes*. But we see *our tribunes successful*. Surely that people have lost their morals, who bestow their votes on those who have none.

The Romans were not wholly sunk from liberty, till morals and religion lost their power. But when the Thomas Paines, and those who recommended him, as a champion against "the presses" of that day, had introduced the doctrines of Epicurus, the Roman people became almost as corrupt as the French are now, and almost as shameless as the *favoured patriots* of our country, who are panting to get office.

Gradually, all power centred in the Roman populace. While they voted by centuries, (the comitia

centuriata,) property had influence, and could defend itself; but, at length, the doctrine of *universal suffrage* prevailed. The rabble, not only of Rome, but of all Italy, and of all the conquered nations, flowed in. *In Tiberim, defluxit Orontes.* Rome could no more be found in Rome itself, than we can see our own countrymen in the favoured patriots of the present day. The senate of Rome sunk to nothing; *the owners of the country no longer governed it.* A single assembly seemed to govern the world, and the worst men in it governed that assembly.

Thus we see the passions and vices of men operate uniformly. What remains, and there is not much of this resemblance that remains, unfinished, will be completed.

We enjoy, or rather, till very lately, we did enjoy liberty, to as great an extent as it has ever been asserted, and to a much greater than it has ever been successfully maintained.

While we look round with grief and terror on so much of the work of destruction as three years have accomplished, we resolve to hope and sleep in security for the future. We will not believe that the actual prevalence of a faction is any thing worse than an adverse accident, to which all human affairs are liable. Demagogues have taken advantage of our first slumbers, but we are awaking and shall burst their "Lilliputian ties;" and as we really do expect, that the jacobins will divide, and that * * * and others will turn state's evidence to convict their accomplices, we resolve to indulge our hopes and our indolence together, and leave it to time, no matter what time, and

truth, to do their slow but sure work, without our concurrence. We still cherish the theories that are dear to our vanity. We still expect, that men will act in their politics, as if they had no passions, and will be most callous or superior to their influence at the very moment, when the arts of tyrants or the progress of public disorders have exalted them to fury. Then, yes, then, in that chosen hour, reason will display her authority, because she will be free to combat error. Her voice will awe tumult into silence: revolution will quench her powder when it is half exploded; the thunder will be checked in mid volley.

Such are the consolations that bedlam gives to philosophy, and that philosophy faithfully gives back to bedlam—and bedlam enjoys them. The *Chronicle*, with the fervour of scurrility, and all the sincerity of ignorance, avers, that there is no danger—our affairs go on well; and *Middlesex* is comforted. *They* can see no danger; if Etna should blaze, it would not cure the moles of their blindness*.

But all other men who have eyes are forced to confess, that the progress of our affairs is in conformity with the fixed laws of our nature. Our wisdom made a government, and committed it to our virtue to keep; but our passions have engrossed it, and they have armed our vices to maintain their usurpation.

What then are we to do? Are we to sit still, as

* The reader is assured, however strange it may appear, that this paragraph is copied with perfect fidelity;—a moderate sagacity will enable him to divine *why* this passage in particular needs such an avowal.—Ed.

heretofore, till we are overtaken by destruction, or shall we rouse now, late as it is, and show by our effort against a jacobin faction, that, if we cannot escape, we will not deserve, our fate?

We justly consider the condition of civil liberty as the most exalted, to which any nation can aspire; but high as its rank is, and precious as are its prerogatives, it has not pleased God, in the order of his providence, to confer this pre-eminent blessing, except upon a very few, and those very small, spots of the universe. The rest sit in darkness, and as little desire the light of liberty, as they are fit to endure it.

We are ready to wonder, that the best gifts are the most sparingly bestowed, and rashly to conclude, that despotism is the decree of heaven, because by far the largest part of the world lies bound in its fetters. But, either on tracing the course of events in history, or on examining the character and passions of man, we shall find, that the work of slavery is his own, and that he is not condemned to wear chains, till he has been his own artificer to forge them. We shall find, that society cannot subsist, unless the appetites and passions of the violent are made subject to an adequate control. How much control will be adequate to that end, is a problem of no easy solution beforehand, and of no sort of difficulty after some experience. For all who have any thing to defend, and all, indeed, who have nothing to ask protection for, but their lives, will desire that protection; and not only acquiesce, but rejoice in the progress of those slave-making intrigues and tumults, which, at length, assure to society its repose, though it sleeps in bondage. Thus it will

happen, and, as it is the course of nature, it cannot be resisted, that there will soon or late be control and government enough.

It is, also, obvious, that there may be, and probably will be, the least control and the most liberty there, where the turbulent passions are the least excited, and where the old habits and sober reasons of the people are left free to govern them.

Hence it is undeniably plain, that the mock patriots, the opposers of the constitution, who, under pretext of being the people's friends, have kept them in a state of continual jealousy, irritation, and discontent, have deceived the people, and perhaps themselves, in regard to the tendency of their principles and conduct; for, instead of lessening the pressure of government, and contracting the sphere of its powers, they have removed the field-marks that bounded its exercise, and left it arbitrary and without limits. The passions of the people have been kept in agitation, till the influence of truth, reason, and the excellent habits we derive from our ancestors, is lost or greatly impaired; till it is plain, that those, whom manners and morals can no longer govern, must be governed by force.

Let any man, who has any understanding, exercise it to see, that the jacobin party, by rousing the popular passions, inevitably augments the powers of government, and contracts within narrower bounds, and on a less sound foundation, the privileges of the people.

The chief hazard that attends the liberty of any great people, lies in their blindness to the danger. A weak people may descry ruin before it overwhelms them, without any power to retard or repel its ad-

vance; but a powerful nation, like our own, can be ruined only by its blindness, that will not see destruction as it comes; or by its apathy and selfishness, that will not stir, though it sees it.

Our fate is not foretold by signs and wonders: the meteors do not indeed glare in the form of types, and print it legibly in the sky; but our warning is as distinct, and almost as awful, as if it were announced in thunder by the concussion of all the elements.

Chapter XII.

CHARACTER OF BRUTUS; OR, THE ASSASSINATION OF TYRANTS BOTH UNLAWFUL AND UNPRODUCTIVE OF ADVANTAGE.

Brutus killed his benefactor and friend, Cæsar, because Cæsar had usurped the sovereign power. Therefore, Brutus was a patriot, whose character is to be admired, and whose example should be imitated, as long as republican liberty shall have a friend or an enemy in the world.

This short argument seems to have, hitherto, vindicated the fame of Brutus from reproach, and even from scrutiny; yet, perhaps, no character has been more over-rated, and no example worse applied. He was, no doubt, an excellent scholar and a complete master, as well as faithful votary, of philosophy; but, in action, the impetuous Cassius greatly excelled him. Cassius alone of all the conspirators acted with promptness and energy in providing for the war, which, he foresaw, the death of Cæsar would kindle; Brutus spent his time in indolence and repining, the dupe of Anthony's arts, or of his own false estimate of Roman spirit and virtue. The people had lost a kind master, and they lamented him. Brutus summoned them to make efforts and sacrifices, and they viewed his cause with apathy, his crime with abhorrence.

Before the decisive battle of Philippi, Brutus seems, after the death of Cassius, to have sunk under the weight of the sole command. He still had many able

officers left, and among them Messala, one of the first men of that age, so fruitful of great men; but Brutus no longer maintained that ascendant over his army, which talents of the first order maintain every where, and most signally in the camp and field of battle. It is fairly, then, to be presumed, that his troops had discovered, that Brutus, whom they loved and esteemed, was destitute of those talents; for he was soon obliged by their clamours, much against his judgment, and against all prudence and good sense, to give battle. Thus ended the life of Brutus, and the existence of the republic.

Whatever doubt there may be of the political and military capacity of Brutus, there is none concerning his virtue: his principles of action were the noblest that ancient philosophy had taught, and his actions were conformed to his principles. Nevertheless, our admiration of the man ought not to blind our judgment of the deed, which, though it was the blemish of his virtue, has shed an unfading splendour on his name.

For, though the multitude to the end of time will be open to flattery, and will joyfully assist their flatterers to become their tyrants, yet they will never cease to hate tyrants and tyranny with equal sincerity and vehemence. Hence it is, that the memory of Brutus, who slew a tyrant, is consecrated as the champion and martyr of liberty, and will flourish and look green in declamation, as long as the people are prone to believe, that those are their best friends, who have proved themselves the greatest enemies of their enemies.

Ask any one man of morals, whether he approves

of assassination; he will answer, no. Would you kill your friend and benefactor? No. The question is a horrible insult. Would you practise hypocrisy and smile in his face, while your conspiracy is ripening, to gain his confidence and to lull him into security, in order to take away his life? Every honest man, on the bare suggestion, feels his blood thicken and stagnate at his heart. Yet in this picture we see Brutus. It would, perhaps, be scarcely just to hold him up to abhorrence; it is, certainly, monstrous and absurd to exhibit his conduct to admiration.

He did not strike the tyrant from hatred or ambition: his motives are admitted to be good; but was not the action, nevertheless, bad?

To kill a tyrant, is as much murder, as to kill any other man. Besides, Brutus, to extenuate the crime, could have had no *rational* hope of putting an end to the tyranny: he had foreseen and provided nothing to realize it. The conspirators relied, foolishly enough, on the love of the multitude for liberty—they loved their safety, their ease, their sports, and their demagogue favourites a great deal better. They quietly looked on, as spectators, and left it to the legions of Anthony, and Octavius, and to those of Syria, Macedonia, and Greece, to decide, in the field of Philippi, whether there should be a republic or not. It was, accordingly, decided in favour of an emperor; and the people sincerely rejoiced in the political calm, that restored the games of the circus, and the plenty of bread.

Those who cannot bring their judgments to condemn the killing of a tyrant, must, nevertheless, agree that the blood of Cæsar was unprofitably shed. Liberty

gained nothing by it, and humanity lost a great deal; for it cost eighteen years of agitation and civil war, before the ambition of the military and popular chieftains had expended its means, and the power was concentrated in one man's hands.

Shall we be told, the example of Brutus is a good one, because it will never cease to animate the race of tyrant-killers. But will the *fancied usefulness* of assassination overcome our instinctive sense of its horror? Is it to become a part of our political morals, that the chief of a state is to be stabbed or poisoned, whenever a fanatic, a malcontent, or a reformer shall rise up and call him a tyrant? Then there would be as little calm in despotism as in liberty.

But when has it happened, that the death of an usurper has restored to the public liberty its departed life? Every successful usurpation creates many competitors for power, and they successively fall in the struggle. In all this agitation, liberty is without friends, without resources, and without hope. Blood enough, and the blood of tyrants too, was shed between the time of the wars of Marius and the death of Anthony, a period of about sixty years, to turn a common grist-mill; yet the cause of the public liberty continually grew more and more desperate. It is not by destroying tyrants, that we are to extinguish tyranny: nature is not thus to be exhausted of her power to produce them. The soil of a republic sprouts with the rankest fertility: it has been sown with dragons' teeth. To lessen the hopes of usurping demagogues, we must enlighten, animate, and combine the spirit of freemen; we must fortify and guard the constitutional ramparts about liberty. When its

friends become indolent or disheartened, it is no longer of any importance how long-lived are its enemies: they will prove immortal.

Nor will it avail to say, that the famous deed of Brutus will for ever check the audacity of tyrants. Of all passions, fear is the most cruel. If new tyrants dread other Bruti, they will more naturally soothe their jealousy by persecutions, than by the practice of clemency or justice. They will say, the clemency of Cæsar proved fatal to him. They will augment their force and multiply their precautions; and their habitual dread will degenerate into habitual cruelty.

Have we not then a right to conclude, that the character of Brutus is greatly over-rated, and the fashionable approbation of his example horribly corrupting and pernicious?

Chapter XIII.

THE ABOLITION OF A NATIONAL DEBT NO LESS IMPOLITIC THAN UNJUST.

In the present extremities of the state, some men have asked, whether the government ought not, without further hesitation, to sponge off the national debt. The jacobins wonder, why they have delayed it so long. The English government will, we hope, long trust and painfully try the public spirit of the nation, rather than destroy the debt. We have, indeed, men among us, who would sooner destroy any debt, public or private, than hazard their popularity; nay more, they would sponge off all debts for its sake; but, we are willing to believe that nothing short of dire necessity will bring the rulers of England to touch the property, that has so long been confided to the safeguard of the public faith and morals; and that they will not of choice withhold a penny of the interest.

It is true, necessity, though it is the tyrant's plea, is a sufficient one, when it exists, for the best government. There is no reasoning against necessity; but when there is any reasoning about its existence, it is manifest that it does *not* exist: it not only makes its own law, but its own evidence. It comes like the fire, or flood, or pestilence, and renders doubt as much impossible as resistance.

Admitting, then, the sufficiency of the plea of

necessity, to vindicate the withholding of the interest of the British national debt from the public creditors, the fact, that such neccessity exists, is still to be made out. We have already said, this sober argumentative making out of a necessity is inadmissible. Though it is better the national debt should perish than the nation, still it is no less true, that the sponging off the national debt is a measure of violence, which needs all the justification that an irresistible necessity can afford. Necessity is a law that makes all other laws silent. It would vindicate the stoppage of the interest of the national debt—it is equally manifest, that nothing short of actual necessity will justify such an act.

Now, while the English government is in the regular course of paying the interest, and it is only inconvenient to proceed in that course, because it is an unpopular task to provide taxes for that purpose, it is absolutely a relinquishment of the plea of necessity, to pretend, that the government is forced to stop the interest.

The time, we believe, has come, to justify all practicable reforms of expenditure, and improvements of the revenue, rather than a resort to violent and arbitrary remedies of any sort; especially such as sponging off the debt. For it can scarcely escape remark, that Great Britain has been, from the first, contending against revolutionary principles. How can Great Britain, the champion of faith, and law, and order, with consistency or advantage adopt, as a remedy, the very measure that is the first badge and sure forerunner of the evil?

For what is revolution? what is its favourite work, but first, and with most malignant ardour, to destroy

what faith, and law, and morals, have established and guarded? The English debt of six hundred millions sterling is spread all over the kingdom: it has taken root for a century. To pluck that root from the soil, we believe, would shake the security of all property; and, in the event, it might possibly subvert the monarchy.

When the convenience of relieving the nation from this mountain of debt is once admitted, where will the government stop? Will not the progress be, as in France, to make one convenient sacrifice a precedent and argument for another? The clergy will stand next on the black list; the nobles will follow. Will the *many* continue patient under the pressure of taxes, when the plunder of the *few* is so familiar a substitute? In a revolution, as in a shipwreck, one part of the crew is kept alive by eating the other.

The national debt is, in fact, private property. We cannot see, why the public should seize and appropriate to itself that description of private property, rather than the ships in the Thames, or the goods in Bond-street. The seizure may be less unpopular, and may be more surely carried into effect, than the capture of the ships or goods; but we cannot see that the plea of necessity will better justify the act in one case than the other. Indeed, the preference seems to be due to the property in the funds, as the government has solemnly renounced its power of control over it, and chosen to stand in no other relation to the owner of stock, than as an equal contracting party.

Many persons may be led to think favourably of sponging off the tremendous mass of English debt,

by the belief that it cripples all their exertions in war. England, once free from this mill-stone, they imagine, would be free to encounter her enemies. The usefulness of such an act of injustice tolerably well reconciles them to its principle.

The most successful answer to the measure will be, to question its utility. The whole taxes fall far short of the expenditures of the nation in time of war. Suppose the debt sponged off, and all the products of the taxes applied to necessary expenses, how shall the deficiency be made up? By new loans? Shall the British Chancellor of the Exchequer, with the sponge in one hand, hold out a subscription-paper in the other? Who would lend? or escape the mad-house if he did? If loans could be obtained, a new national debt would be scored up, at the rate of some millions a year; and, as soon as the size of the debt had begun to terrify some by its effect in crippling the energies of the government, and to tire others by the pressure of taxes, it must be sponged off again. Be it remembered, the violent remedies of great evils are, almost always, aggravations of those evils. If the minister, unable or unwilling to borrow, should raise taxes within the year, equal to the expenditures of war, what becomes of the plea of necessity?

On the whole, is it not right, that the property of a nation should defend its liberty? And is this to be done to the extent that the public safety may require, unless the government can obtain loans in its necessity, that it will provide for in its prosperity? A great public debt is, no doubt, a great evil; but the loss of liberty and independence is one infinitely greater. It

is some alleviation of that evil, for any government (for all are prone enough to become corrupt) habitually to guide its measures and its counsels, by the experience, that its good faith is its good policy. It ought to make men better, to contemplate the example of a state, tried, and tempted by adversity, and groaning under the load of taxes, yet still faithful to its engagements, and enjoying an ample resource in the confidence of its creditors, by deserving their confidence, and keeping their property sacred from violation. Such a state gives an illustrious lesson of morality to its subjects. It fulfils the great duty of all governments, which is to protect property. This is not all. It will seem, to some practical men, still more to the purpose, that such a state will have the control, in the extreme exigencies of the public affairs, of the last shilling of private property. Such is the spectacle of the British government.

It is left to others to compute, how essential a part of the national wealth consists of property in the national debt, and how much poorer the nation would be by sponging it off. Such a measure would aggravate necessity; but we cannot conceive how it would supply means. As this violation of the public faith would be the most tremendous, as also the most unequal and unfair tax, that ever was levied on a state, it is natural to suppose, the dread of it would sanction other very strong measures to get at the wealth of the subjects by taxes, and that they would cheerfully acquiesce, at least, in their temporary adoption.

Chapter XIV.

THE LIBERTY OF THE PRESS NOT THE MAIN SAFEGUARD OF THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION.

We are, heart and soul, friends to the freedom of the press. It is, however, the prostituted companion of liberty, and somehow or other, we know not how, its efficient auxiliary. It follows the substance like its shade; but, while a man walks erect, he may observe, that his shadow is almost always in the dirt. It corrupts, it deceives, it inflames. It strips virtue of her honours, and lends to faction its wildfire and its poisoned arms, and in the end is its own enemy and the usurper's ally. It would be easy to enlarge on its evils. They are in England, they are here, they are every where. It is a precious pest and a necessary mischief, and THERE WOULD BE NO LIBERTY WITHOUT IT.

Before the art of printing was known, bad ministers were crushed by public odium. The favourites of Edward the Second of England were as effectually overpowered by it, as if the press had been used. The freedom of the press cannot hinder its being venal. Had it then existed, those odious favourites would have used it to palliate their crimes. They would have bought the press; and, no doubt, they would have been patriots in type, till they were stripped of the means of corruption; and then again they would have been odious monsters. In our time this boasted luminary vents more smoke than light;

so that the circumstances of transactions and the characters of men are to be clearly known only by waiting for the evidence of history in a future age, when it will be of very little comparative importance, whether the subject be understood or mistaken.

Though nobody will deny the influence of public opinion upon government, still it is a distinct question, what is the boasted salutary influence of the press? It *might* help the cause of truth and liberty; it *might* produce as well as gratify a thirst for inquiry. But who pretend to be the instructors of the people? men who are themselves instructed, or needy, ignorant profligates? The use of the press must be supposed to lie in helping a nation to discern and to judge. Experience seems to show, that the press makes every thing more apparent than the truth; and by eternally pretending to judge, the public opinion is without authority or influence; it is counterfeited by fools, and perverted by knaves. But a plain people, without a press, would know oppression, when they felt it; and there is no government, which is not supported by military force, that would disregard the complaints of an indignant nation. By the help of the press we see invisible things; we foresee evils in their embryo, and accumulate on the present moment all that is bitter in the past, or terrible in the future. A whole people are made sick with the diseases of the imagination. They turn their best men out of office on the strength of their suspicions; and trust their worst men in spite of their knowledge of them. It is the press that has spoiled the temper of our liberty, and may shorten its life.

Still, we repeat, we would by no means wish to

see the liberty of the press abridged. But how it is that we are dieted upon poisons and yet live, we pretend not to say.

From these deductions we venture to pronounce, that the freedom of the press is not the cause of the security of the British people, or of the duration of their constitution. It is not our business to make a theory; but we should think, that the freedom of that constitution arises rather from the distinct existence and political power of three orders, than from the press. The press could tell of oppression, if it had happened; but the lords and commons could remove and punish it.

But though we cannot possibly discover how the freedom of the press can secure the constitution of an hereditary government, we can easily see, how in a popular state the *abuse* of the press may fortify a faction in power. It is not merit, it is not wisdom that in such a state can confer power; it is faction which has an interest in accumulating wealth and privilege upon its members, and persecution on its rivals. We know a country, where the press is successfully used for the concealment of the truth. Newspapers written all on one side are read all on one side; and the truth and argument of the adverse party are as little known, and have less chance of being understood by the other, than the language of Hindostan, or the religion of Thibet.

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